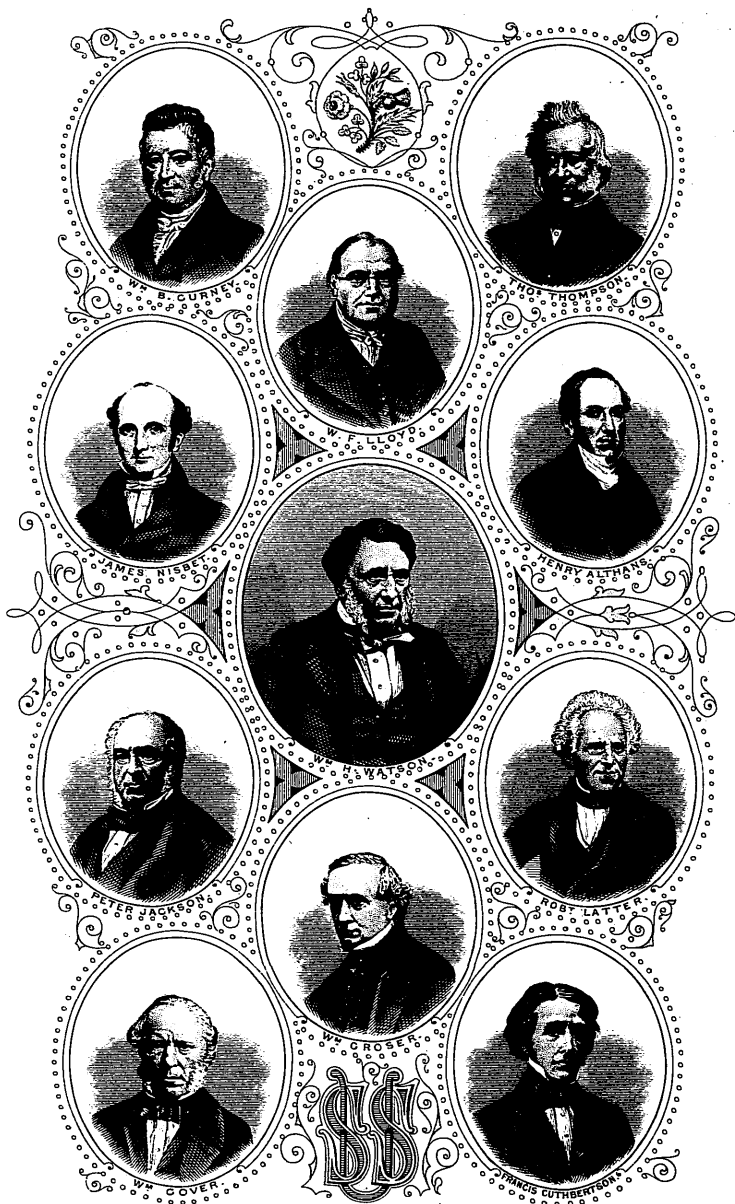












THE
SUNDAY SCHOOL UNION:

ITS HISTORY AND WORK.

BY
WILLIAM HENRY WATSON,
||
LATE SENIOR SECRETARY OF THE SUNDAY SCHOOL UNION,

With a Memorial Sketch of the Author,

BY W. H. GROSER, B.Sc., F.G.S.

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P R E F A C E.

THOSE readers of the present volume who may take the trouble to compare it with the Author's former work, will find a difference in the following particulars :—

The circumstances connected with the rise and progress of the Sunday school system have generally been omitted, having found a more appropriate place in "THE FIRST FIFTY YEARS OF THE SUNDAY SCHOOL," a volume already published by the Union.

Instead of the narrative being carried through in a chronological series, the various operations of the Union have been grouped together in distinct chapters, so that the description of each department of work is rendered perfect in itself.

The History was intended to close with the Jubilee of the Sunday School Union, and its immediate results, but it has been found impossible to refrain from bringing in some subsequent facts, the record of

which, it is trusted, will add to the interest and value of the volume.

The writer indulges the hope that this and the preceding work, to which reference has been made, will gratify and instruct all who are concerned for the religious instruction of the young on the Lord's day. They have been compiled under an impression that this great work would be promoted by the principal facts connected with its rise and progress being thus gathered together, while it could be done with little difficulty.

The attempt is prayerfully commended to the blessing of that Holy Spirit; whom the Saviour has promised shall guide His disciples into all truth.

August, 1868.

MEMORIAL SKETCH

OF

THE AUTHOR,

BY WILLIAM H. GROSER, B.Sc., &c.

CHRISTIAN earnestness is a grace which presents itself under different aspects in different individuals. In one man it takes the form of outbursts of emotion ; his whole soul is on fire, and his tongue utters burning words ; but his energy soon expends itself and is followed by a period of comparative inaction. His neighbour is, perhaps, of a completely opposite type. He is never roused into enthusiasm ; compared with the other he seems impassive and spiritless, almost unfeeling ; yet he is never inactive, never indolent.

These are extreme forms of earnestness. As in nature so in grace—there are the *convulsive* and the *continuous* modes of action ; and between the extremes lie many gradations, which it would be foreign to our purpose to trace. What all Christians are concerned with is, to know and to aim at that type of earnestness which is the most Christ-like, and therefore the most commendable and influential. Doubtless it occupies an intermediate place. If our earnestness be spasmodic it may lead us into extravagance and imprudence, which in the quieter movements which succeed we shall bitterly regret and severely condemn ; while the influence of our seasons of energetic action will be neutralized by the uncertainty of their recurrence. On the other hand, we may be too impassive, chilling more ardent co-workers

by our seeming coldness, and repelling those whom a more demonstrative bearing would have gathered to our side.

Of those with whom the writer has been privileged to associate few have seemed to him more nearly to approach the true type of earnest devotedness than he whose character and career it is now a mournful pleasure to recall. The earnestness of William Henry Watson was a quality which neither effervesced into mere excitement, nor degenerated into inaction; it never exploded, nor did it ever collapse. It was tested during half-a-century, and under that test it never changed. Mr. Watson's own estimate was somewhat different. A few hours before he died he remarked to his friend and pastor, the Rev. W. Howieson, "In looking back on my past life I regret that my religion has been one of principle almost exclusively, and that there has been in it so little of emotion." The sentiment was characteristic of the man, and betokened an accurate acquaintance with his own mental tendencies. Yet those who were privileged to know him, however slightly, could assuredly declare that the evidences of deep and genuine earnestness of spirit in all that he did were too obvious and too ample to need other enforcement.

The sight of a noble river often awakens a desire to trace it to its source; and when our admiration is excited by a work of art, or literary composition, curiosity is stimulated to learn something of its author. The birth and development of high moral and spiritual character, form, in like manner, a theme of interesting inquiry to the religious educator. We see and admire the result, and we naturally wish to know what causes combined to produce it, and to what past circumstances present facts are due.

In the case of our late friend and coadjutor, enough is ascertainable from the scanty records of his earlier life to show that, in his case, parental training combined with peculiarly favourable church privileges to educate, in the highest sense of the word, both intellect and heart. The home circle became a large one, William Henry being the eldest of twelve children, of whom but two have survived him. The date of his birth was June 15th, 1798, so that he was spared to enter on his seventy-first year.

His health was delicate in childhood, and he accordingly spent some considerable time under the care of a worthy matron at Eynsford, in Kent—a place in which he ever felt a lively interest. We well remember returning with Mr. Watson from an excursion to Sevenoaks in the summer of 1866, and how he pointed with emphatic earnestness to the little village as one of the chief scenes of his early history. Physically, he seems to have been under no small obligations to his country life, and many beside himself have cause for thankfulness that both bodily and mental nurture proved so judicious and so successful, and that the possession of a sound mind in a sound body was Mr. Watson's enviable privilege for so large a portion of his life.

As a youth he seems to have been singularly free from inordinate self-esteem. He was eminently "sober-minded" at an age when too many young people lose sight of the apostolic exhortation. To natural talents of a superior order was added a soundness of judgment which must have rendered him fully conscious of his abilities; yet his caution and modesty preserved him from forwardness, while his accurate self-knowledge enabled him to direct his efforts into suitable channels, to discern his own intellectual and moral wants, and to adopt fitting methods for meeting them.

Mr. Watson's powers and acquirements were early consecrated to the Saviour's service. Mention is made in his diary, under date July 27, 1820, of a lecture on "Self-deception," which had greatly impressed him, and which led to close and faithful examination. With much diffidence he explored his own character and motives, but he added, "I can say, 'O Lord, search me and try me, and see if there be any way of wickedness in me, and lead me in the way everlasting.'" A month later he records a profitable conversation with a young friend on religious subjects, and laments the "pride of his heart," which "gives him much pain" and is "greater than he could have believed." How complete was the triumph over such a tendency those who best knew Mr. Watson could best testify.

In October of the same year his diary notes an event of much interest. His early friend, Mr. William Gover, brought

him the "copy" of the first number of a penny magazine for Sunday scholars, which he was about to publish, and which appeared on the first of the following month, under the title of *The Sunday Scholar's Magazine*.

It claims special notice as the first, or nearly the first, of "that series of cheap religious publications for the young (to quote Mr. Watson's own words) by which such great blessings have been and still are conferred on the rising population of this and other lands." * Little did the two young men imagine what progress in Sunday school literature they would be permitted to see and promote, in connection with the then comparatively feeble Society which now mourns their loss. Little could they have imagined that it would be their privilege to stand side by side in the field of Christian labour for nearly half-a-century longer, and then to close an honoured career at the same age and within a few weeks of each other. "They were lovely and pleasant in their lives, and in their death they were not divided."

The circumstance on which we have thus dwelt seems to have much impressed Mr. Watson. "It excited," he wrote, "a painful reflection, that I am only learning *words*, while others are studying *things*, and are making use of the knowledge they have already acquired. This thought almost tempted me to give up my application to Latin and Greek languages." This temptation he had the good sense to resist, but the lesson was not lost upon him. He evidently felt, with Lord Bacon, that "knowledge is to be referred to use and action," and that religious knowledge forms no exception to the rule. Accordingly he shortly afterwards made a public profession of his faith and decision, and was admitted to the fellowship of the Christian church according to the usages of the Baptist denomination, being baptised by his esteemed friend and pastor, the Rev. John Chin, on August 1st, 1821. Under that date he wrote in his diary, "Oh may I be enabled by the grace of God to walk worthy of the profession which I have this night made!" The prayer was abundantly answered.

* "First Fifty Years of the Sunday School," p. 114.

The above allusion to classical languages brings to light another feature of Mr. Watson's character. Without a trace of pretentiousness, he was from youth a *student*, ever gathering knowledge and storing up facts and ideas. He followed his father's profession, that of a solicitor, having been articled to him at fifteen years of age. Yet, to diligent attention to business claims, he united the pursuit of classical and general knowledge, and thus became emphatically "a well-read man." His marriage to Miss Ann Deane (for forty-seven years his true helpmeet, and now his sorrowing widow) took place in October, 1821, and shortly after we find him thus sketching out his plan of daily duty. We commend the example to Christian young men :—" Rose at six. My private devotions and the reading of some serious book ; the writing of my diary, or extracts in my common-place book for the preceding day ; letter writing, or any engagement of a benevolent nature which requires my attention, will fully occupy me until breakfast, Breakfast at eight, and go into the office at nine ; dine from two to three, and spend an hour after dinner in reading law books with my brother. Tea at five ; allow half an hour for this. Leave the office at nine in term time and eight in vacation. In the vacation I hope to devote the time after tea to classical pursuits, and propose to devote one week to Latin and another to Greek, and so on alternately. My dear wife and myself have agreed to devote an hour every evening to the perusal of a course of history. We are now reading Mitford's History of Greece, which we began a few nights since."

Mr. Watson's office hours at that time would now be considered very long, yet by method and industry he was able to attain a degree of culture which thousands of young men, whose business duties are comprised between ten and four o'clock, would deem it impossible to reach.

But our friend was not amassing knowledge for himself alone. He was already a Sunday school teacher in Lion Street School, Walworth, though the date of his entrance upon that work which was henceforth to engage his chief energies, does not appear. His first Superintendent was a Mr Dry, who died in or about the year 1830. In 1822 Mr. Watson seems to have felt

special interest and concern on behalf of the elder boys at Lion Street ; and in his diary he intimates his intention of meeting some of them on a week evening for the purpose of instructing them in the evidences of Christianity. His friend, the late Mr. William Bugby, cordially entered into the plan, and offered some valuable suggestions. Appropriately enough, the young teacher became, at a later date, the writer of the first treatise on "*Senior Classes in Sunday Schools.*"

The time was now approaching when William Henry Watson was to be brought into that more prominent position for which he had been unconsciously preparing. Indeed, his intelligence and business habits had already marked him out as eminently fitted for the duties and responsibilities of office. The Sunday School Union was steadily extending its operations in the rapidly growing metropolis, by associating together the schools which everywhere sprang up. Among others, the teachers of the connected schools in the districts of Lambeth, Newington, and Camberwell, had felt themselves strong enough, as early as the year 1818, to constitute a distinct branch of the South Auxiliary Union ; and in the spring of that year a meeting was held to carry the wish into effect. The late estimable Thomas Thompson was chosen treasurer of the new branch, and Messrs. Watson and Bugby were appointed secretaries. Fifty years afterwards the former enjoyed the privilege of presiding at the jubilee of the branch—now developed into an auxiliary union, of meeting a few old coadjutors, and of receiving from younger workers the expressions of their affectionate esteem. Mr. Watson's local secretaryship was, however, of comparatively short duration, being soon interrupted by a circumstance fraught with importance to the Sunday school cause.

The late Mr. Henry Althans—whose memory is deservedly honoured for his lengthened and valuable labours in the cause of secular and religious education—having resigned his office, as minute secretary to the Parent Union, in the year 1823, Mr. Watson was invited to fill the vacant place. The result of the application is thus recorded in his diary :—"April 25th,—I have been invited to accept the office of one of the secretaries

of the London Sunday School Union, but have been compelled to decline the honour, because other engagements would prevent my filling the office with either comfort or utility." "Tuesday, 13th May.—Annual meeting of the Sunday School Union. Very pleasant. The Committee have been unable to find a secretary, and I have undertaken the office. May I be made useful, and kept humble!"

Of the degree in which the influence of the young secretary contributed to the result, it may be difficult to form an estimate; but certain it is that the years 1823-4 formed an important era in the history of the Union. The depository had outgrown the humble premises allotted to it, and rooms were taken at 19, Paternoster Row, for the purposes of the Society. The sales of publications, which in April, 1823, amounted to £1,744, rose in the succeeding twelve months to nearly £3,000.

The Union had now attained its majority, and henceforth took a higher position among religious and educational institutions, and exerted a more powerful influence for good in connection with Sunday school enterprise at home and abroad.

At the beginning of the year 1826, Mr. W. F. Lloyd, so well and honourably known as one of the pioneers in Sunday school literature, tendered his resignation of office as secretary of the Union. Unwilling to part with one who for sixteen years had been so closely identified with the Society, and had so largely contributed to its progress and prosperity, the Committee begged their valued colleague to continue his services as foreign secretary, offering, on their part, to relieve him of the home correspondence. Mr. Lloyd assented, and the home department was placed under the care of the minute secretary. With that conscientious fidelity which uniformly characterised him, Mr. Watson at once retired from office in the Lambeth branch, feeling that his increased duties on the Parent Committee would interfere with his efficiency as local secretary. A source of much weakness in religious institutions, and not in these only, would be removed, if those who hold official positions would determine that their continuance in an office should never outlast their ability to perform its duties. At the same

time Mr. Watson received as a colleague the late Mr. Peter Jackson, with whom he laboured without interruption for more than thirty years. It is not too much to affirm, that to the administrative ability of the one, and the business knowledge and persevering energy of the other, the Sunday School Union is indebted, in a very large measure, for its present high position and extensive influence.

Mr. Watson's efforts were not confined to the mere routine of official duties, important and responsible as these had become. His diary affords many graphic and interesting views of the work he performed in the promotion of Sunday School interests in different parts of the country. In the summer of 1828, for example, we find him undertaking, in company with his colleague, Mr. Joseph Maitland, a mission tour in the counties of Kent and Sussex. They visited in succession Sevenoaks, Tunbridge Wells, Rye and Winchelsea, Ashford, Dover, Margate and Ramsgate, Sittingbourne, Maidstone, and many other places of less note, seeking to afford counsel, help, and encouragement to their fellow-labourers, by bringing under their notice the various aids and appliances provided by the Parent Union, and especially by urging the value and importance of local associations for mutual stimulus and assistance.

From their carefully prepared and somewhat elaborate report, we gather that the visitors were favourably received, and in most cases cordially welcomed, by their provincial friends; and while observing, as might have been anticipated, many defects of organization, and here and there a lack of zeal and energy, within the schools, with occasional instances of ignorance or bigotry outside them, they expressed themselves much cheered with what they had witnessed, and more deeply convinced than ever of the value and importance of Sunday school agency. "At the village of Newenden," says the report, "we conversed with some children whose ignorance was deplorably great, for they knew not who was the first man, nor anything of Jesus Christ the Saviour. They said, however, that they should be very happy to become acquainted with these subjects, and wished they could enjoy the benefit of

Sabbath school instruction." Doubtless, such cases were then of much more frequent occurrence than at the present time; yet, after the lapse of forty years, it is to be feared that there remains many a rural waste in our own land, hitherto unreclaimed by Christian enterprise.

The noble contest of earnest zeal with educational disadvantages, which was then maintained by humble Sunday school workers in rural districts, receives frequent illustration in Mr. W.'s diary. One school, near Bolton in Lancashire, is mentioned as having owed both its existence and its efficiency to a worthy Methodist, who, desirous of improving himself and benefiting others, entered a Sunday school and offered to teach the "alphabet class" without knowing his letters! He acquired a knowledge of these important symbols by hearing some of the elder children mention the names of the letters, which he repeated after them. He thus rose from class to class until able to read the Scriptures, and eventually became the founder of the school above alluded to. This good man seems to have adopted, at least in principle, the late Archbishop Whately's well-known counsel to a brother undergraduate, and to have regarded a "pupil" as much better than a "coach."

The report concludes by suggesting whether the Committee may not "think it desirable on a future occasion to cultivate an acquaintance" with other local associations, "by means of a similar deputation." The hint was not allowed to drop, and the two friends were deputed, in the following year, to a similar duty in the counties of Essex, Suffolk, and Cambridgeshire. Thus was originated a department of the Society's efforts from which substantial advantages to Sunday school organization and practical Christian union have since resulted.

Reports of subsequent deputations to the provinces appeared in the "Occasional Papers" published by the Union, previously to the existence of any more comprehensive official organ.

To pursue in detail the public career of Mr. Watson, would be to trace the history of the institution to which he devoted ungrudgingly and unremittingly the ardour and energy of youth, and the judgment and experience of riper years. His

own literary labours, and especially the present volume (which he regarded as his final legacy to the Union), have rendered this unnecessary. But no one would be able to form from his own writings a due estimate of the extent to which he himself contributed to the steady progress and growing prosperity which it was his delight to witness, and which he has so unostentatiously recorded. His private notes bear ample testimony to the constancy of the demands made by London schools and auxiliaries upon the time and talents of the young secretary, and not less to the conscientious fidelity with which such requirements were met. Abstracts of speeches and addresses are of constant occurrence in his diary; and are, without exaggeration, models of accurate statement, lucid arrangement, and cogent application. One does not wonder at finding a brief intimation to the effect that, on visiting Maidstone in the year 1832, the writer was told that a former address was still remembered with pleasure, and that one school had received an accession of efficient teachers in consequence of the appeals which had fallen from his lips.

The early Committee meetings, held at seven o'clock a.m., and subsequently at half-past seven, at which so large a portion of the work of the Union was formerly, as it still is, conducted, were attended by Mr. Watson with characteristic regularity for a long series of years, during most of which he resided at a considerable distance from the City. A gentleman, who was for a time associated with Mr. W., first as one of his scholars, and afterwards as assistant teacher, recently remarked, that even as a lad he was led to notice and to admire the steady punctuality with which the Union Secretary used to make his appearance, week by week, *en route*, from his residence at Camberwell to the place of meeting in Paternoster Row.

Nor was he indifferent to the claims of Sunday school literature. Beside the aid constantly rendered by him as a member of Committee in the preparation and revision of the publications of the Union, he also occasionally contributed to the pages of the *Sunday School Teacher's Magazine*, which had been started by his colleague, Mr. Lloyd, in the year 1813.

The *Child's Own Book*—the pioneer of our halfpenny magazines for the young—found in him an able and willing supporter; and the initials “W. H. W.,” together with those of other members of the Union Committee, are among our own earliest recollections in juvenile literature.

Our departed friend was thus in thorough sympathy with that which formed so important a branch of the Society's labours almost from the first years of its existence—the formation and extension of a department of useful literature specially adapted for Sunday scholars and teachers. Nor was ability wanting by which this sympathy might be rendered practically influential. In addition to extensive and varied knowledge, Mr. Watson possessed great facility of composition; and his style, though devoid of ornament, was characterised by the clearness and force which marked his spoken addresses. Hence it is not surprising that when the Committee put forth, at the commencement of the year 1844, the *Union Magazine for Sunday School Teachers*, the opening pages should have been occupied by the first chapter of a “History of the Sunday School Union,” by its senior secretary. The “history” was continued through the subsequent numbers of the volume, being brought down to the date of the celebration of the Jubilee of Sunday Schools, in 1831-2. It was subsequently extended by the author at the request of his colleagues, and issued in an enlarged form, as a Memorial Volume, in connection with the Jubilee of the Union in 1853. The narrative of that important celebration has been ably executed by the subject of the present sketch; but his characteristic modesty reserved the following interesting fact for more private record. Under date October 28th, 1856, he says, in his diary, after briefly recounting the opening services held in the Jubilee Building, “When the mode of celebrating the Jubilee was under consideration, the secretaries held a meeting thereon. I went to the meeting in a cab from Kennington Cross, and on the way the plan of erecting a memorial building was suggested to me. It met the views of my colleagues, was adopted by the Committee, and has been brought to a happy consummation.”

When this scheme was first made public, some friends shook

their heads doubtfully, questioned if country teachers would sympathise in a plan which seemed designed almost exclusively for the benefit of the metropolis, and thought it uncertain if the needful amount could be raised. But the result of the Committee's appeal afforded another evidence of the soundness of Mr. Watson's judgment; and Sunday school teachers, not only in provincial towns, but in other lands beside our own, have participated in the satisfaction with which the noble structure in the Old Bailey is regarded by their London fellow-workers.

Although Mr. Watson had already begun to feel his physical energies declining, so that, as he regretfully observes, he had been "compelled to avoid the labour" incident to the erection of the building, he still continued to attend both morning and evening Committee meetings, and in addition to his ordinary official duties undertook, at a much later date, the secretaryship of the Publication Sub-Committee. It was only by slow degrees that these seasons of fraternal intercourse and united labour became separated by wider intervals; and they did not terminate until positive inability forbade the effort.

In the year 1859 the sudden death of Mr. Henry Althans, son of one of Mr. Watson's oldest colleagues, and who had conducted the *Teacher's Magazine* from the time of his father's decease, threatened the discontinuance of that old established periodical. Under date of June 3rd, Mr. W. wrote, "There was no number published in May. The Sunday School Union, with whom it originated in (I believe) 1813, although conducted by members of the Committee on their own responsibility, has purchased it, and, at the Committee's request, I have undertaken the responsibility of editing it by way of trial for six months." He adds, most characteristically, "It is a new work for me, and will need wisdom from on high."

The duties of editorship were discharged by Mr. Watson with his accustomed care, judgment, and fidelity. The circulation of the magazine was extended, many valuable contributions were obtained, and whatever other monthlies might be late in their issue, the *Teacher's* was invariably ready for sale on the appointed day. At home, the editor was half reproachfully

charged with a perpetual devotion to "copy" and "proofs;" and when the magazine was at length merged in the *Sunday School Teacher*, he himself confessed that it had been "his constant companion for the last eight years." At the same time he readily acceded to the request of his colleagues that he would introduce the new candidate for Sunday school favour by a brief account of its venerable predecessor. A month later, and one other paper, his last contribution to periodical literature, made its appearance. It was a brief memoir of his friend and correspondent, the late Dr. F. A. Packard, Secretary to the American Sunday School Union,—a man of kindred spirit, and for whom Mr. W. cherished the highest esteem. The paper evinced no lack of vigour, either in thought or expression, and none of the writer's coadjutors suspected how soon the hope breathed in Dr. Packard's closing letter was to be realized,—
"Keep on, my good brother, in the work you have in hand as long as the day lasts, and let us hope to mingle our voices together in ascriptions of glory, and honour, and power, to Him that sitteth upon the throne, and to the Lamb for ever and ever."

But his own forecastings of the future proved only too accurate. As the anniversary services of 1868 drew near, our friend addressed himself to the preparation of the annual report of the society,—that record of onward progress which it had been his privilege to compose and to present to successive audiences of Sunday school teachers for upwards of 30 years. His family and some of his colleagues felt anxious as to the result, and gently suggested that the effort might prove too much for his failing energies. "I should like to read it once more—it is the last time," was the touching answer, and every objection was effectually silenced. He accordingly went to his house at Eastbourne, where he spent a few days previously to the meeting, that he might gather a little strength for his final public effort; and seemed much gratified that his wish had been so readily acceded to.

The term of earthly service was now nearly ended; but Mr. Watson had still another duty which he desired to discharge.

The history of the institution with which he had been so closely identified, and whose interests he had so faithfully promoted from youth till age, was still incomplete; and during the summer of 1868 his still busy pen was actively employed, so far as the state of his health permitted, in the congenial task of finishing the present work, which will prove a fitting memorial of its author. When at length the last page had been written, the manuscript, together with a cheque for £100, was forwarded to the Committee, as his final contribution to the Society. It was accompanied by a letter of resignation, which awakened no ordinary feelings in the recipients, and which had evidently been penned with more than common emotion.

The Committee could not bear the thought of sundering a connection which had seemed an essential feature of the Union, and sought to testify their sense of the value which they attached thereto by requesting their friend to accept the office of Vice-President. Mr. Watson was both touched and gratified when the resolutions, embodying their sentiments and wishes, were presented to him by his late colleagues in the secretariat, Messrs. Groser and Hartley. The Committee, however, had not waited thus long to render honour where honour was so justly due. In 1862, and again in 1864, they had given practical expression to their feelings towards Mr. Watson by presenting him with tokens of their affection and esteem. On the latter occasion, when Mr. Watson had completed forty years of official connection with the Union, he received a handsome silver salver, suitably inscribed, and accompanied by a congratulatory address, engrossed on vellum, and signed by the whole of the Committee.

At the time of his resignation Mr. Watson was already suffering from the disease which was so soon to terminate his honoured and useful career. He "died in harness," though not by a sudden stroke; sinking gradually and almost imperceptibly, until, surrounded by his children and his children's children, he calmly fell asleep, on October 24th, 1868.

The closing scene was in perfect harmony with all that had gone before. With tranquil foresight he awaited, without

agitation or alarm, the approach of the angel of death. "As to the ground of my hope," he said, "as a sinner about to meet God, it is all contained in these words,—'God has exalted Jesus to be a Prince and a Saviour, wherefore He is able also to save them to the uttermost that come unto God by Him, seeing He ever liveth to make intercession for them.'" With such foundations of faith, we marvel not at the unruffled peace which our departed brother enjoyed; still less when we remember that his private life was the fitting counterpart of his more public character. No one could say of him that, while labouring for the good of the children of others, he had neglected the claims of his own family. Time was always found for home duties; and among the many entries in his diary, not the least interesting is one in which he gratefully records that "all" his "dear children" had "now publicly professed their attachment to the Saviour."

Although the Sunday school cause was privileged to secure the larger share of Mr. Watson's active services, it was far from engrossing his whole attention and sympathies. From the year 1833, until his death, he held the office of deacon of the Baptist church at Walworth, taking the most active interest in all its affairs, and discharging his onerous duties with unwavering constancy and fidelity. He was an active and honoured member of the board of the Baptist Missionary Society; he founded the British Empire Mutual Life Assurance Company, and from its formation until his death acted as its solicitor; and during his late years, at least, he took a lively interest in parochial affairs. Nor did his rapidly declining health prevent him from giving his support to Mr. M'Arthur's candidature for the borough of Lambeth, as a member of that gentleman's committee.

Our friend's views of religious truth were clear and well defined, yet his sympathies could not be controlled by the limits of one denomination. Hence the catholicity of the Union was, in his eyes, one of its highest excellences; that he should have fixed upon it as his special sphere of labour is therefore not surprising; but the selection did credit also to his self-knowledge, for few men were more eminently qualified for committee and

secretarial duties. To the care, caution, and precision by which the members of his profession are usually distinguished, he added an amount of cheerfulness and suavity which won esteem and affection as well as respect. His soundness of judgment was remarkable, and his self-possession equally so. He was, emphatically, a man to be trusted; and his coadjutors set the highest value on his sagacity, prudence, and good temper; especially at those critical periods which occur in the history of every great Society, and through which the Sunday School Union has more than once been called to pass.

This sketch would be incomplete without pointed reference to that liberality of disposition which formed so marked a feature in Mr. Watson's character. Devoted and unsparing in personal support of objects which his judgment approved, he was also a generous contributor of pecuniary assistance; while systematic and discriminating in his donations, he was a truly cheerful giver. "Giving money in due proportion, and to proper objects," says Mr. Howieson, "was placed by him among the rules inculcated by the religion of Jesus; this giving was marked, not only by the largeness of its amount, but by the manner in which it was conducted. He used hospitality without grudging; and the visitors' book would have been by this time a bulky volume which would have recorded the names of all the ministers and missionaries who have passed through his open doors, and who have been sent on their journey after a godly sort. Such a supporter would justly be regarded as one of the pillars of the church with which he was connected."

Mr. Watson was careful throughout life to place honour upon the public services of the sanctuary; and the regularity with which he discharged this duty, was attended in one case with results not a little remarkable. Some years ago, a young person was standing at the doors of a local theatre, intending shortly to enter and witness the performance. While thus waiting, she observed Mr. Watson and his family, of whom she had some slight knowledge, wending their way towards Lion Street Chapel, to attend the week evening service. The circumstance fixed itself upon her mind, and led her to contrast the course

pursued by our friend with that which she herself was then following. Eventually she was led to become an attendant at Lion Street, joined the church, and gave the most satisfactory evidence that the silent influence thus casually and unconsciously exerted, had been the means of effecting a radical change of heart and life.

In business engagements, in the social circle, in the retirement of home, Mr. Watson's character shone forth with the same steady and unchanging brightness. An inexhaustible fund of anecdote rendered him a truly agreeable companion, yet his liveliness never passed the bounds of Christian sobriety, Prudence and cheerfulness, fixity of principle, and gentleness of manner, in him were happily combined. A true Christian gentleman, an earnest and active philanthropist, he has left a vacant place which it will be hard indeed to fill. Such men are the strength and glory of the Church of Christ, and the memory of their deeds is her sweet and precious heritage.

The mortal remains of our honoured friend rest in the cemetery at Nunhead, where they were interred on the Saturday following his decease, amidst demonstrations of respect and affection from old and young, friends and neighbours, such as nothing but true worth can evoke. Nearly the whole of the Sunday School Union Committee took part in the mournful ceremony, accompanied by deputations from the Baptist Missionary Society, the Religious Tract Society, and other institutions with which Mr. Watson had been more or less intimately associated. Funeral discourses were subsequently delivered to the Walworth Road church and congregation, by the Rev. W. Howieson, and to the members of the Union, by Mr. Watson's former pastor, the Rev. S. Green.

Gathering around the open grave, on that chill autumn afternoon, while the sighing winds and rustling leaves seemed to echo the sadness of every heart, a vast and sorrowing throng bade farewell to one who had been to them as a father, a friend, and a guide. Yet, mingling with the sense of deep and irreparable loss, were devout thanksgivings that such a life had been consecrated to ends so noble, and spent in work so blessed; and many a prayer arose to the mercy seat, that a "double

portion" of the spirit of the departed one might rest on those who should from time to time be called to stand, as he did, in the foremost rank of the Sunday school enterprise.

Thus—

"The bright memories of the holy dead,
The blessed ones departed, shine on us,
Like the pure splendours of some clear large star,
Which pilgrims, travelling onward, at their back
Leave, and at every moment see not now ;
Yet, whensoever they list, may pause and turn,
And with its glories gild their faces still."

APPENDIX TO SKETCH.

To the foregoing brief sketch may be fitly appended a few of those testimonials to the worth of our departed coadjutor, which have been voluntarily offered by the various institutions with which he was associated.

On receiving Mr. Watson's letter of resignation, in August, 1868, the Committee of the Sunday School Union passed the following resolutions, the subsequent receipt of which afforded him no little satisfaction :—

"1. That this Committee deeply regret the unavoidable necessity of accepting the resignation of their highly-esteemed friend and colleague, *William Henry Watson, Esq.*, who for an uninterrupted period of *forty-five years* has ably and devotedly discharged the duties devolving upon him as one of the *gratuitous secretaries* of the Sunday School Union. They hereby tender to him their heartfelt thanks for his long and valuable services, characterized as they have uniformly been by quiet earnestness, steady perseverance in duty, sound judgment, ready tact, unvarying courtesy, and ardent attachment to the Sunday School Union and its objects, of which his generous donation of one hundred pounds just received affords the latest testimony

"2. That in now offering to their valued coadjutor their

deepest sympathy in this season of personal affliction, they would fervently pray that the means employed for his recovery may be so blessed of God, that ere long he may be restored to his usual health, and for years to come be enabled to give to this Committee the benefit of his wise counsel, as occasion may arise.

"3. That Mr. Watson be affectionately requested to accept the *Vice-Presidency of the Sunday School Union.*"

The mournful intelligence of their friend's removal from all earthly associations, elicited renewed expressions of the feelings shared by every member of the Committee :—

"Under the influence of no ordinary emotion the Committee of the Sunday School Union inscribe upon their records the decease of WILLIAM HENRY WATSON, the Vice-President of the Society, their valued friend and coadjutor, who, having long and honourably filled a prominent and responsible position in the foremost ranks of those who guide and govern the Christian philanthropy of this country, rested from his labours October 24th.

"To trace the course of his connection with the Sunday School Union is to recapitulate the far-spreading influence of his assiduous labours on its behalf, would be to write in detail the history of the Sunday school cause for the last forty-five years, during which lengthened period he ably sustained the office of Secretary to this Society, and was intimately identified with most of the improvements which have so largely ministered to the development and efficiency of Sabbath schools within the past half century.

"Their sorrow is mingled with thanksgiving as they remember the many years through which their late friend was permitted to pursue an enterprise so dear to his heart, and they would bear willing testimony to the uniform kindness and suavity of demeanour, and the hearty Christian cheerfulness which characterized his intercourse with all who were associated with him in his works and labours of love.

"His life afforded a bright example of true consistent piety, and by his death the Church of God has lost a man mighty in

faith and good deeds ; the cause of Sunday schools, an earnest devoted worker ; and each member of the Committee, a friend and counsellor.

“In tendering to his bereaved widow and family the expression of their sincere heartfelt sympathy, the Committee desire to renew the testimony of their affectionate regard and esteem for Mr. Watson, and to assure them that his memory will be long and deeply cherished in their midst, as an incentive to faithfulness in well doing.”

The Committee of the Lambeth Auxiliary, in connection with which, as already stated, Mr. Watson first became associated with the Union, recorded their estimate of his worth in the following terms :—

“The Committee in receiving the intelligence of the decease of Mr. W. H. Watson, Senior Secretary of the Sunday School Union (which occurred on Saturday, October 24th, 1868, in the 71st year of his age), desire to record upon their minutes the fact that this Union, when constituted a Branch of the South London Auxiliary in March, 1818, was privileged in having its first minutes recorded by the hand of their beloved friend as one of its Secretaries.

“They were afterwards called to part with Mr. Watson, when, in 1823, he was appointed to fill an official position at the Parent Union, to which he consecrated his rare and singular abilities for a period of forty-five years.

“This Committee would remember with devout gratitude the bright example he has left behind of all that is lovely and of good report; and whilst they mourn the great loss the Church of God in general, and the cause of Sunday Schools in particular has sustained, they nevertheless rejoice he has entered those eternal mansions which the Lord Jesus has prepared for all who love him.

“They fervently pray that all the consolations of the Gospel may be vouchsafed to the sorrowing family of their departed friend, and that his removal from amongst us may be the means of stimulating those who remain to more earnest efforts for the salvation of the young.”

The Church at Walworth Read, at a Meeting held November 9th, 1868, thus testified the sense of the loss which they had sustained:—

“That in recording the decease of their esteemed and beloved brother and senior deacon, William Henry Watson, this Church desires with unfeigned gratitude to magnify the grace of God in raising up, and sparing to the Church for so many years, one who has so largely contributed to its comforts and prosperity.

“Called by the Great Head of the Church into His service at an early period of his life, for nearly half a century he was a consistent and active member of this Church, during thirty-five years of which period he filled the office of deacon, how usefully and honorably is known to all, Humble and prayerful, consistent and judicious, he manifested in his life and conversation the fruits of the Spirit, adorning the doctrine of God His Saviour in all things, being constant in season and out of season in the service of his Lord and Master.

“After a long and useful life he died in peace, and ‘Came to his grave as a shock of corn fully ripe in his season.’ To the pastor and his brother deacons, and to the membership at large, his removal is emphatically a great loss. The Church however, takes comfort in the thought that their loss is their brother’s gain, for he has exchanged earth for heaven, toil and conflict for rest and reward. ‘The Lord gave, the Lord hath taken away, blessed be the name of the Lord.’

“To his bereaved widow and family, the Church desires to convey its deep sympathy and sincere condolence in the irreparable loss they have sustained.”

The following appears in the Minutes of the Committee of the Baptist Missionary Society, under date, November 4th, 1868:

“That this Committee have heard, with very deep sorrow, of the decease of their friend and colleague, Mr. W. H. Watson, to whose diligence, liberality, and zeal, the Society has been indebted during a long series of years. They remember with affectionate respect the courtesy and firmness with which he expressed his convictions—the candid appreciation he invariably showed of the opinions of those from whom he differed, and the

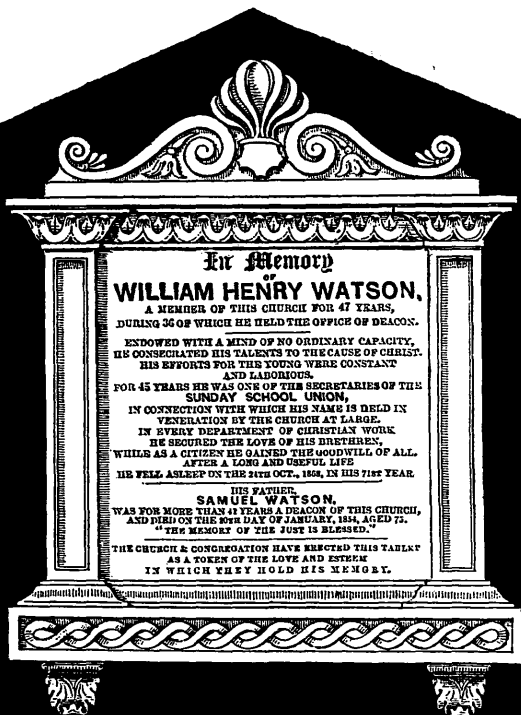
sound judgment which guided his conduct as a member of this Committee for more than twenty years.

“His untiring activity in behalf of Sunday schools, of which he was an ardent friend from his youth to the close of his life, his devoted service to the Church of which he was a member for half a century, and the faithful discharge of his public duties as a Christian citizen, will endear his memory to all by whom he was known.

“They offer to Mrs. Watson and the family their sincerest condolence in the loss they have sustained, and while with them lamenting that loss, they would glorify God for the grace which sustained and crowned the consistent, devoted, and blameless life of their departed friend.”

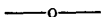
Resolutions similar to the foregoing, and expressing in varied terms one common sentiment of honour and esteem for the coadjutor of whose services they had been deprived, were passed by the representatives of the undermentioned institutions, in addition to the sorrowful testimonies of a large circle of private friends:—Protestant Deputies, Baptist Building Fund, Evangelical Alliance, Newington Auxiliary Bible Society, Walworth Road Chapel Sunday School, Walworth Road Christian Instruction Society, Walworth Young Men's Bible Class, Walworth Literary and Scientific Institution, Flint Street Boys' School, Surgical Aid Society, British Empire Mutual Life Assurance Company, Perpetual Investment Company, National Industrial Life Assurance Company, and the Parochial Authorities of St. Mary's, Newington.

A Tablet, of which a fac-simile is subjoined, has recently been erected in Walworth Road Chapel by the Church and Congregation.





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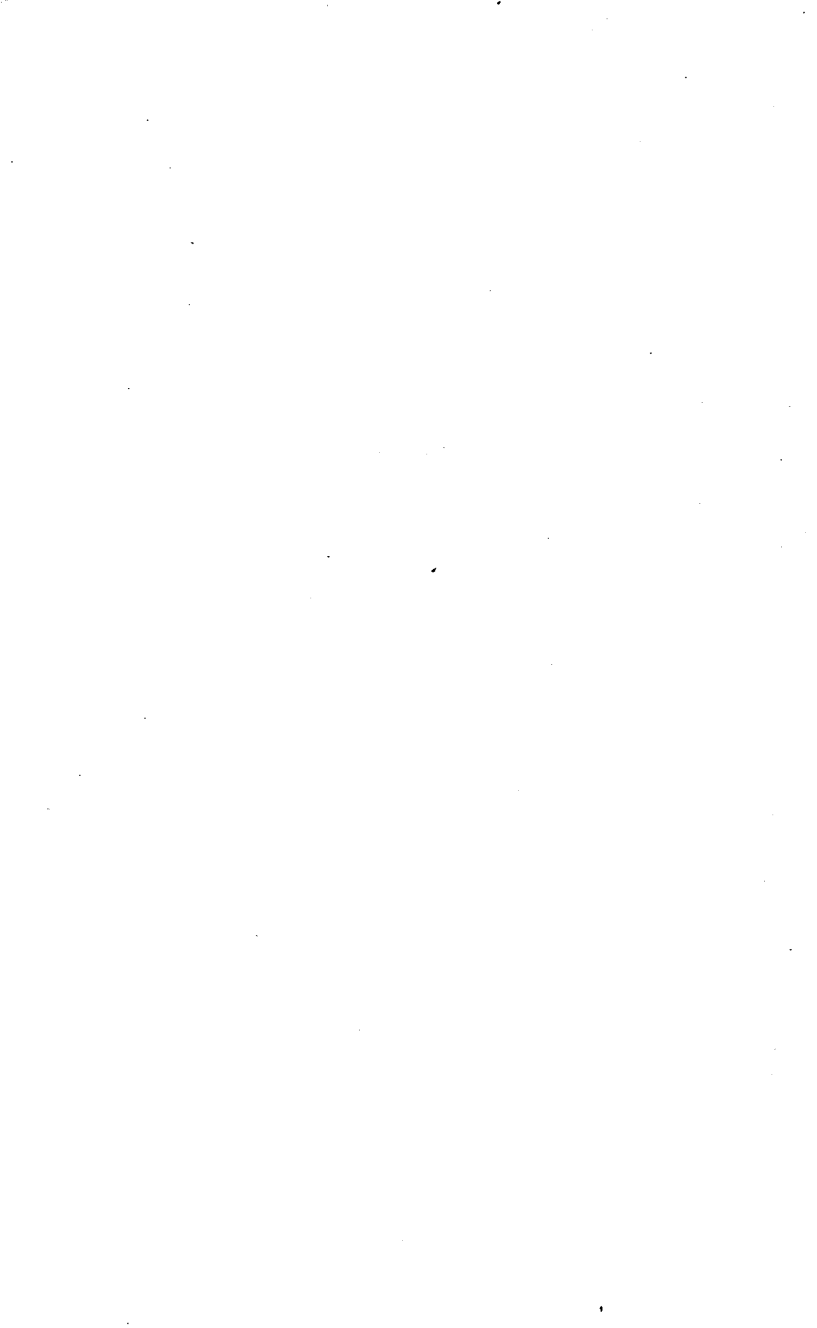
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THE SUNDAY SCHOOL UNION,

ITS HISTORY AND WORK.

CHAPTER I.

THE FORMATION, OBJECT, AND CONSTITUTION OF THE SUNDAY SCHOOL UNION.

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THE rise and progress of the Sunday School system formed the subject of a volume—published in the year 1866, under the title of “The First Fifty Years of the Sunday School.” The manner in which the simple but sublime idea was presented to the mind of Robert Raikes—the energy and success with which he proceeded to develop the suggestion—the approbation which it received—its immediate effects, and its more indirect influence, are there detailed. The attention given to the young on the Lord's-day soon awakened a desire to provide for them a better general education, and thus the popular Day School sprang into being. The ability to read, thus acquired, necessitated an increased supply of suitable books, and the Religious Tract Society was established to meet that want. The demand

which Sunday Schools created for copies of the Sacred Scriptures led to the formation of the British and Foreign Bible Society, and to all the blessings which that Institution has conferred upon the world.

The little seed which was sown in Gloucester, in the year 1781, has now become a great tree, and the young of the British Islands and their Colonies, with the English speaking nations of the great American Continent, have long sat and rejoiced under its shadow. The European nations are gradually becoming sharers in the benefit, and it is an interesting subject for inquiry by what means the influence of the Sunday School has thus been extended. The Institution has advanced far beyond its original design. Mr. Raikes at first thought of little more than the gathering the neglected children out of the streets, putting them under the care of some very humble instructors, who, for a small remuneration, imparted to them elementary literary instruction, and conducted them to public worship. Several years elapsed before it was perceived that the employment of paid teachers presented a most formidable obstacle to the progress of the system, and it only gradually gave way to the introduction of Christian men and women as gratuitous teachers.

Amongst those who devoted themselves to the gratuitous instruction of the rising generation at an early period, were found Mr. Joseph Fox, the intimate friend of Joseph Lancaster, and Mr. William Brodie Gurney. The latter gentleman was born at Stamford Hill, on the 27th of December, 1777. His grandfather, Thomas Gurney, was a man of considerable mechanical genius. When a youth he took a great interest in astrology, and for the sake of a work on that subject he bought at a sale a lot of books labelled "Sundries." Among them was "Mason's Short-hand," a system which had fallen into disuse on account of its complexity. This book immediately engaged Mr. Gurney's inquiring mind. He soon learned the system, and simplified it to enable him to take down sermons. There still exists in the family a book of sermons taken by him at Ridgmount, in Bedfordshire, in 1732-33, while only about

eighteen years of age. This acquisition had an important effect on the history of his family. Fifteen years afterwards he learned, from an advertisement, that the short-hand writer of the Criminal Court, held in the Old Bailey, had died, and a successor was required. He applied for the office, gave proof of his qualification for it, and was elected. For thirty years he continued to discharge its duties, and was respected by all with whom he became officially connected. His leisure time he filled up with clock and watchmaking, his original business.

In the year 1770 he was succeeded by his son Joseph. In his hands, after a few years, the business considerably increased. The frequency of courts-martial during the American War ; the trial of Warren Hastings and Horne Tooke ; the Mutiny at the Nore, and inquiries connected with it ; the question of the abolition of the Slave Trade, on which evidence was taken at the bar of the House of Lords, all called for the exercise of his talent. Some of the speeches taken by him on these occasions, especially during the trial of Hastings, were delivered with a rapidity which it had been thought impossible to meet. A conversation between his Royal Highness the Duke of Clarence, afterwards King William the Fourth, and Joseph Gurney, affords an amusing instance of his Royal Highness's discrimination. One day, during the inquiry into the Slave Trade, the Duke asked Mr. Gurney for which side he attended. Mr. Gurney told him for the planters. "Oh !" he replied, "then I am mistaken. I really supposed you were an abolitionist. I thought you had an abolition face." Those who remember the countenance of William Brodie Gurney, and how readily it was excited by any tale of wrong, will appreciate his Royal Highness's suspicions, and conclude that the abolitionism of the father's face was inherited by his son.

During the first ten years of Mr. W. B. Gurney's life his family continued to reside at Stamford Hill. He himself relates the following incident. "In the course of the last two or three years that my father resided at Stamford Hill, I was occasionally sent by my mother to inquire after the health of Mr. Henshaw, a superannuated Independent minister, who resided at Kingsland,

in the house of Mr. William Fox." Mr. Fox was the founder of the Sunday School Society. "Frequently, while I trundled my hoop, I took on my left arm a little basket with some jelly, or a little cake, refreshments which he (Mr. Henshaw) had not the means of purchasing, his income being very small; he having refused assistance, which was generously offered him, from Mr. Whitbread and from Mr. Howard, both of whom felt a great esteem for him. On one of those occasions I found an elderly gentleman, whose figure I still bear in my mind, as well as his dress: a pepper and salt coat, a scarlet waistcoat, and lying by him a cocked hat. This was John Howard, the philanthropist." This visit must have occurred in the year 1787. In the October of that year the family removed to Walworth, a village in the South of London, where Mr. Gurney received at first the instruction of Mr. Burnside, but was afterwards sent to school to a Mr. Freeman, who had been a Baptist minister, but had embraced Arian views, and ultimately sank into Unitarianism. The influence of Mr. Freeman's religious opinions was exceedingly injurious to Mr. Gurney's mind; but after leaving school the sermons of Mr. Dore, the pastor of Maze Pond Chapel, Southwark, where his parents attended, were made the means of leading him to right views of his own condition as a sinner in the sight of God, and of Jesus Christ as the Saviour of sinners. He was baptized at Maze Pond, on August 1st, 1796, together with Miss Benham, whom he afterward married.

Although his father's business had largely increased, it was an uncertain one, so that when he left school it became a grave question whether he should follow his father's profession. He, therefore, turned his thoughts in other directions; but ultimately his appointment, in conjunction with his father, as short-hand writer to the House of Lords, decided his course. Thenceforth he gave himself to that profession.*

Before Mr. Gurney had publicly joined the church of Christ his career of usefulness had begun. In the neighbourhood of his father's house at Walworth was a school, which his mother

* Baptist Magazine, 1855, pp. 529—532.

had been instrumental in raising. The master was encouraged by the Committee to open it on Sunday for religious instruction, and was rewarded with a penny a child for each Sunday up to the number of thirty. The result was that the number always was thirty; a lad being sent out to fetch in one or two if it fell short; but it was never exceeded, except by accident. Mr. Joseph Fox and Mr. Gurney, with two friends, took charge of the school in 1796. In the following year Mr. Gurney became the Secretary, and under the care of gratuitous teachers it increased to 180 children, for whose accommodation it became necessary to erect a new School-room, the funds for which were raised to a large extent by his own personal appeals.

In 1801, Mr. Gurney, with the assistance of some young friends, began the Maze Pond Sunday School; the boys' school being held for several years in Bermondsey-street, close to the outlet of Snow's-fields; the girls' school was close to Weston-street. The boys' school comprehended some of the raggedest colts that were ever got together, but the change in their appearance within a year was surprising. The school at Walworth, though commenced five years previously, was never so bad as that called the "Maze Pond Sunday School," from the chapel it attended and which kept it up. Both the boys' and the girls' school were the means of spiritual good to some of the children.* The neighbouring church at Carter-lane, under Dr. Rippon's care, caught the spirit, and large schools were speedily in operation there.†

It was natural that these teachers should seek to improve the quality of the instruction given to the young persons thus gathered together, and they were stimulated and guided in this by the interest which Mr. Gurney's sister took in the "Missionary Magazine," commenced in Edinburgh in the year 1796. That lady was a frequent contributor to the publication, and sometimes employed Mr. Gurney as her amanuensis. He thus became acquainted with the mode pursued in the schools of Scotland, of Catechising on the Scriptures, and also with Elliott's

Letter of Mr. Gurney, in *British Banner*, of May 2nd, 1855.

† *Baptist Magazine*, 1855, p. 594.

“Scripture Catechism,” and other works intended to aid beginners in adopting it. He introduced the plan into the Sunday School. Mr. Gurney was not aware that such a mode of instruction, which is now happily so universal, had then been introduced into any school ; but he found its adoption productive of the most beneficial results. While the minds of the scholars were embued with the knowledge of the Scriptures, they also contracted a habit of reading the sacred volume which had its influence long after they left the school.

In the year 1802, Mr. William Marriott, who was engaged in conducting a school at Friar’s Mount, Bethnal Green, was introduced to Mr. Gurney, who had then become connected with a society established at Walworth for opening schools in the neighbouring villages. They both found reason to lament the want of plan and order, and desired some means by which the neglected districts might be supplied with schools, and young persons of suitable dispositions be induced to undertake the work. On the removal of Mr. Gurney into London, early in 1803, his house became the place of meeting for several active Sunday School teachers, amongst whom were Messrs. Beams, Burchett, Niven, Weare, and others ; and at one of these meetings the subject of inducing teachers in London to unite for mutual encouragement and support, and with a view to the extension and improvement of Sunday schools, was made a matter of conversation. Its practicability and desirability becoming apparent, it was determined to call a meeting to consider the subject more at large, and adopt measures for carrying it into execution. Accordingly, a numerously attended meeting was assembled on the 13th of July, 1803, at Surrey Chapel School-rooms, and the SUNDAY SCHOOL UNION was then established, where in 1799 the meeting had been held which resulted in the formation of the Religious Tract Society..

Mr. Marriott was appointed the Treasurer, Mr. Gurney the Secretary, and a Committee was also elected to carry out the objects of the Society. At the commemoration of the Jubilee of the Union, in 1853, the only known survivors of the band who, animated by love to the Saviour and to the souls of the

young, thus met together and formed the Union, were Mr. Gurney, Mr. James Nisbet, and Mr. Thomas Thompson, all of whom have since entered into their rest. It was felt to be a pleasing reminiscence, and one which correctly marked the catholic character of the institution, that those three survivors should represent respectively three important sections of the Christian church. With Mr. Gurney's early history the reader has already become acquainted.

Mr. Nisbet was born at Kelso, and in the early part of the year 1803, found himself, on the eighteenth anniversary of his birthday, a friendless youth in the metropolis. On the Sabbath he bent his way to the Scotch church in Swallow-street. The Scotch psalms were sung, prayer was offered, and a sermon preached by a venerable and affectionate pastor. When the service was ended, and he was introduced in the vestry to Dr. Nicholl, he felt himself no longer friendless. He was almost immediately installed as a Sunday-school teacher, and, beside finding Christian companions, commenced that course of active usefulness which was never to intermit for more than fifty years.* Mr. Nisbet was anxious to discharge faithfully the duties of the office he had undertaken. He used to rise at four o'clock to study the chapters which had been appointed as the lessons for the next Sunday in the school, lest he should be asked a question by any scholar that he could not answer; aiding his own study by the careful perusal of Matthew Henry's Commentary.†

Mr. Thompson was a native of London, having been born 19th August, 1785, immediately under the sound of Bow Bells. His heart was early brought under the influence of divine truth, and that by means rather singular. He was, when five or six years old, in the habit of going to a baker's shop, near his father's residence, to fetch rolls for breakfast. The baker's man took notice of him, and the child spent much time in his company. To him Mr. Thompson owed the instruction which first led him to seek his eternal welfare. He often afterward heard his early friend preach when, as the Rev. William Chapman, he became

* Funeral Sermon, by Rev. James Hamilton, D.D., 1854.

† Union Magazine, 1852, p. 347.

the estimable pastor of the Tabernacle, Greenwich, and predecessor of the Rev. William Lucy, formerly of Bristol. Thus commenced a long life of varied Christian usefulness, extending through the lengthened period of eighty years.*

The Union was designed to consist of teachers and others actively engaged in some Protestant Sunday School. Its objects were declared to be:—1st. To stimulate and encourage each other in the religious instruction of children and youth. 2nd. By mutual communication to aim at improving each other's method of instruction. 3rd. To promote the opening of new schools by influence and personal assistance wherever it might be deemed expedient. It will thus be seen that the Sunday School Union, like the Religious Tract Society, which preceded it, and the British and Foreign Bible Society, which immediately followed, was founded on truly catholic principles. The object was not to promote the establishment of schools in connection with any one religious body, but to unite all evangelical teachers in a bond of Christian activity for the universal establishment of these institutions.

It is important that this point should be distinctly kept in view, because as the Union has advanced in its career of usefulness, and its advantages have been seen, other institutions have been established, adopting its plans, but applying them to the exclusive benefits of schools connected with particular denominations. Some of these institutions have adopted a distinctive appellation, but others have called themselves Sunday School Unions with a prefix identifying them with the special interests of some religious body. This is a misnomer. A Sunday School Union is an institution designed for the co-operation of all evangelical teachers, and any society which by its rules and practice excludes any such from sharing in its benefits has no right to the title. Considerable difficulties have been often experienced in the formation of Unions in various parts of the country, from its not being found practicable to induce all the religious bodies to combine for that purpose. While this was to be regretted, it nevertheless seemed

* Sunday School Teachers' Magazine, 1866, p. 111.

unwise that those who desired to unite should thus be deprived of the advantages which they anticipated from a Union. While, therefore, the Committee felt it important that the catholic character of such institutions should be preserved and fully carried out, they at the same time thought it desirable to encourage the commencement of a Union, even where it could not be rendered so general as might be wished. With this view they adopted in the year 1822, and made public, the following resolution:—"That where local circumstances absolutely prevent the several evangelical denominations of Sunday School teachers from uniting together in one body, those friends in one or more denominations who may wish to form a Sunday School Union be encouraged to begin by themselves, and then endeavour to procure the co-operation of the other denominations." In order to meet the desire expressed by the teachers of some schools in the country where local unions do not exist, the Committee agreed in the year 1854, to admit the teachers of such schools to all the advantages attending a connection with the Union on their paying an annual subscription of ten shillings. This would not, of course, constitute the teachers members of the Union, but would place them in the same position as they would be if connected with a local Union.

Although there has been for some years past a growing tendency towards denominational action, and from time to time these three catholic institutions have thus lost the support of those who at one time aided them, it is gratifying to perceive that they have steadily advanced in influence and usefulness, and were never probably so active and powerful as at the present moment.

The only qualification for membership prescribed on the formation of the Union was that laid down in the first rule, "The Sunday School Union shall consist of teachers and others actively employed in some Protestant Sunday School, and any person thus employed being desirous of joining this Union, on signifying the same through any member of the Committee, shall be admitted a member of the Union."

The increase in the number of schools in the Metropolis which

followed the establishment of the Union, and which was greatly attributable to its varied operations, led to a conference between the Committee and the Superintendents of Sunday Schools, which was held on the 3rd of December, 1813, at the New London Tavern, and was attended by about 90 persons. The subject discussed was, "The manner in which the Union could be made most beneficial." The proceedings of this Conference were reported to the Committee on the 15th of December; when it was resolved—"That it is desirable to form District Unions of Schools, for the purpose of more fully carrying out the objects of this Society." In pursuance of this resolution the Southwark Auxiliary Union (the title of which was afterwards changed to the South London) was formed on the 9th of March, 1814; the East London Auxiliary, about the same time; the West London, on the 7th September, 1814; and the Central, or North London (which was afterwards designated the North London), on the 23rd November, 1814.

In consequence of a fear having arisen that some further guarantee was required for the Christian character of the Institution, a resolution was adopted by the Committee on June 17, 1824—"That the Auxiliary and Country Unions be recommended to admit into connection with them such schools only whose conductors are of orderly character, and who hold the doctrines of the Deity and Atonement of Jesus Christ, the Divine influences of the Holy Spirit, and that 'all Scripture is given by inspiration of God.'"

The formation of these Auxiliaries rendered some changes necessary in the regulations which were adopted by the general meeting in May, 1814, and by which the Committees of these new Societies were allowed each to send three representatives to the Committee of the Union. The membership of the Union was also modified by declaring that the "Union should consist of the members of the four Auxiliary Unions in London contributing an annual portion of their funds, together with subscribers of 10s. 6d. per annum or upwards. A donation of Ten Guineas shall constitute the donor a member for life." As the Auxiliary Unions acknowledged as members all the teachers of the schools connected with them, those teachers also

became members of the Union. In the month of March, 1836, a Special General Meeting was held, when it was agreed to define more clearly the members who constituted the Union, and to recognise the members of the Branch Unions as well as those of the Auxiliaries with which they are connected. At a subsequent period a further alteration was made, by which the Minute Secretaries of each of the Auxiliary Unions were also constituted members of the Committee. At the Annual Meeting of the year 1839, a resolution was adopted by which the membership of the Union was confined to the Ministers and Teachers of those Sunday Schools within a circle of five miles from the General Post Office who had subscribed during the preceding year, ending the 31st March, not less than 4s. per annum to either of the four Auxiliary Unions in London, or their Branches, together with subscribers to the Union of 10s. 6d. per annum and donors of £10 10s.

The four London Unions whose formation has just been narrated were strictly auxiliary : they formed part of the General Union, and were designed to carry out some of its objects. It was on this ground that they sent their Secretary and representatives to its Committee, and thus shared in its government ; and as the General Committee must incur responsibility for their proceedings, it is manifest that these proceedings should be in accordance with the determinations of that Committee. It is gratifying to state that this system has borne the test of more than fifty years' trial, and has been found to work well. It might have been expected that differences of opinion would frequently arise between the General Committee and the Committees of the Auxiliaries as to the best mode of carrying out the objects of the Union ; but this has not been the case ; an almost uninterrupted harmony has prevailed during this lengthened period. The General Committee has from time to time devolved on the Committees of the Auxiliaries the carrying out of many of the objects of the Union—such as the watching over and assisting the connected schools, and the quarterly and other meetings of the teachers, and has principally confined itself to the preparation of books calculated to aid teachers in their work, and to the promotion of Sunday Schools in this and

other countries. By this division of labour the work has been better accomplished.

This harmony of feeling and exertion has, under the Divine blessing, been preserved, while the thoroughly representative character of the General Committee has faithfully embodied the views of its constituents.

The Committee consisted under the arrangement thus made (exclusively of the officers) of thirty-six members. Of these, sixteen were the Minute Secretaries and representatives of the four London Auxiliaries; over the choice of whom neither the Committee nor the General meeting of the Union had the slightest control. The Committees of the Auxiliaries, consisting of representatives from the various schools connected with them, chose from amongst themselves the three who should be sent to form a part of the General Committee. The remaining twenty members were elected at the annual meeting; but the vacancies in this number were usually supplied from those who joined the Committee as representatives, and thus even the elected members were generally those who had been in the first instance sent by the London Auxiliaries.

The increase in the population of London, and the addition to the number of its schools, caused even this arrangement in the progress of years to prove inefficient for the realizing fully the objects of the Union. The teachers belonging to the schools connected with the four Auxiliaries were too numerous, and lived too widely apart, to be able adequately "to stimulate and encourage each other in the religious instruction of children and youth, and by mutual communication to aim at improving each other's method of instruction." To meet this difficulty Branch or District Unions were formed, having a similar relation to the respective Auxiliaries to that which the Auxiliaries themselves bore to the Union.

As the schools comprised in those Branch or District Unions became more numerous, a desire sprang up among their teachers for a more intimate connection with the General Committee, so that the intervention of the Auxiliaries might be rendered unnecessary. The mode by which this desire could be gratified was the subject of much discussion. In connection with this

subject another question arose, as to whether some mode could not be adopted by which the members could have an opportunity of expressing their opinion as to the proceedings of the Committee, and of freely exercising their judgment as to the individuals to be appointed on the Committee. The Annual Meeting of the Union had become so numerous as to deprive it of all its deliberative character, and the endeavours which were occasionally made to obtain an expression of opinion on subjects which at the time attracted attention, had been very injurious to the special object for which the meeting had assembled. In order that this very important question might be duly considered, two Conferences, with the Committees of the four London Auxiliaries and their branches, were held in the Library of the Baptist Missionary Society, on September 27th and November 1st, 1853, when the following question was discussed—"What are the duties now resting on the Union in relation to the extension and improvement of the Sunday School system, and by what means may those duties be most effectually discharged?" At these meetings various suggestions were made, which subsequently received the serious and repeated attention of the Committee. Some of them involved alterations in the Constitution of the Union, and could, therefore, only be dealt with in a general meeting of members. Such a meeting was accordingly held on June 14th, 1854, when the propriety of increasing the number of representatives sent to the Committee from the Committees of the four London Auxiliaries was considered. No decision was then come to on the point; but it was agreed that, in order to ensure the freedom of the members in electing the Committee, the annual meeting of members should be held distinct from the annual public meeting, which thenceforth ceased to be one of business. The erection of the Jubilee Memorial Building afforded an opportunity of providing a hall in which the members could meet, and opportunity has thus been afforded for enabling them to take a more active share in the affairs of the Union.

It would be unprofitable to detail the discussions which ensued in relation to the constitution of the Committee, and

which resulted in an entire reconstruction of the Union. Instead of four Auxiliaries with numerous branches, it was resolved that the number of Auxiliaries should be unlimited, and that the representatives to be sent to the Committee should be proportioned to teachers in the schools connected with each Auxiliary. Some other minor alterations were made in the Constitution which, as thus settled, is embodied in the following regulations :—

1. The object of this Union shall be—First, to stimulate and encourage Sunday school teachers at home and abroad to greater exertions in the promotion of religious education. Secondly, by mutual communication to improve the methods of instruction. Thirdly, to ascertain those situations where Sunday schools are most needed, and promote their establishment. Fourthly, to supply the books and stationery suited for Sunday schools, at reduced prices. In carrying these objects into effect, the Society shall not in any way interfere with the private concerns of Sunday schools.

2. The Union shall consist of the Ministers and Teachers of those Sunday schools in London and its suburbs, whose conductors hold the doctrine of the Deity and Atonement of Jesus Christ, the Divine influence of the Holy Spirit, and that all Scripture is given by the inspiration of God, and who have subscribed during the preceding year, ending March 31st, to either of the Metropolitan Auxiliaries, not less than five shillings per annum, together with individual subscribers to this Union of a like amount. A donation of ten guineas at one time shall constitute the donor a member for life.

3. The affairs and funds of this Union shall be under the direction of a General Committee, consisting of a President, the Treasurer, the Secretaries, and Twenty Members, elected at the Annual Meeting, together with representatives from the Committee of each Metropolitan Auxiliary; each Metropolitan Auxiliary having not less than 500 teachers connected therewith to send one representative, and an additional representative for every 500 additional teachers so connected. The Committee thus constituted shall meet once in the month, or oftener if requisite, at such time and place as shall be fixed by

themselves—five members to form a quorum. A special meeting may be called by five members communicating their request in writing to the Secretaries. The Committee shall have power to fill up vacancies.

4. Country Sunday School Unions, annually subscribing and reporting to this Society, may be aided as the Committee shall judge expedient.

5. Three Auditors shall be appointed, who shall examine the balance-sheet prepared by the Committee, and report the result of such examination to the Annual Meeting.

6. An Annual Meeting of the Union shall be held in April, or May, when the reports of the Committee and Auditors shall be read, and the President, Treasurer, Secretaries, Committee, and Auditors elected. Special meetings of the members may be called by the Committee, or by a requisition in writing signed by not less than 250 members, and stating the object of the meeting, which shall be held within one month after the receipt of the requisition.

7. Three months' notice in writing shall be given to the Committee of any proposition to be made at an Annual Meeting, for alteration of, or addition to, the constitution; and such proposition shall be only advertised by the Committee.

8. All meetings of this Union shall be opened with prayer.

These discussions, and the results to which they led, have very much simplified the working of the Union, and have increased its efficiency. The power of creating new Auxiliaries, and of thus enabling the teachers to send representatives to the Central Committee, an honour greatly valued, has caused the teachers of many schools to take an interest in its affairs, who formerly were comparatively indifferent to the proceedings of the Union. The privilege has been promptly made use of, and instead of four Auxiliaries, as formerly, there are now ten, namely:—The South London, East London, West London, North London, Islington, South West London, Lambeth, South East, Bermondsey, North East; comprising 703 schools, 15,605 teachers, 175,085 scholars, and which in the whole send twenty-

seven representatives to the central Committee. It will be seen that in the constitution no precise geographical boundaries are affixed to the Union. They have been purposely omitted in order to meet the yearly increase of the metropolis. Five miles from the General Post Office was the limit formerly assigned, but this had become wholly inadequate, and the construction which the Committee have put upon the terms, "London and its suburbs," is a district embraced within the radius of twelve miles from the General Post Office.

The example of the Teachers of London in associating for mutual encouragement and support, was followed in 1810, by the teachers of Nottingham and Hampshire, and since that time similar Unions have been formed in various parts of the country, as well as in foreign lands, with most beneficial results. Such Unions, however, are entirely independent bodies, and their relation to the Union is very different from that of the Auxiliaries to which reference has just been made. It is clearly defined in three resolutions, which were adopted by the Committee in 1848.

1. That it be recommended to the Committees of the Country Unions to follow the practice of the London Auxiliaries in requiring a subscription from schools applying to be admitted to such Unions.

2. That country unions desiring a connexion with the London Sunday School Union, be required to subscribe annually to its funds, and to forward copies of their reports by the beginning of March in each year.

3. That all grants to schools in Great Britain and Ireland be made on the recommendation of the Auxiliaries or Country Unions.

The number of Country Unions thus subscribing and reporting amounted in 1868, to 165 Unions, comprising 2,677 schools, 67,903 teachers, 517,583 scholars. While the Union is desirous, as far as lies in its power, to render assistance to such Unions, in carrying out the object for which they have been established, it claims no authority over them, and incurs no responsibility for their proceedings.

CHAPTER II.

EARLY PUBLICATIONS OF THE UNION.

CONTENTS:—Books for Scholars—"An Introduction to Reading"—"Milk for Babes"—Plans for Establishment and Regulation of Sunday Schools—Sermon by Rev. G. Burder—Ditto by Rev. Dr. Bunting—Usefulness of Dr. Bunting's Sermon—Mr. Joseph Lancaster's System of Instruction—The Clerkenwell Lessons—First Step towards Collective Teaching—Mr. Lloyd, his History and Appointment as Secretary—Publications noted in Report to First Public Meeting—Evenings for Committee Meetings—Depository Established—Advantages Contemplated—Regulation as to Sale of Books—Catechisms—Circumstances connected with their Removal from the Catalogue—Effect on Trade of Union—Official Changes noted as they occur.

HAVING thus narrated the origin of the Sunday School Union, with the objects contemplated in its formation, and traced the modifications and enlargements which its extension has, from time to time, rendered necessary; it becomes desirable to detail the means which have been adopted to realize those objects.

The Committee who were appointed on the formation of the Union, found the most pressing necessity presenting itself to their notice, was the supplying suitable books for enabling teachers to instruct the scholars. They therefore immediately proceeded to prepare and publish "An introduction to Reading, in two parts," "A Catechism in verse entitled 'Milk for Babes,'" and "a select list of Scriptures designed as a guide to teachers for a course of reading in Sunday Schools." The first of these publications was prepared by Messrs. Marriott and Gurney, the "Milk for Babes," by Mr. J. Neale; and Mr. John Heard, who sustained for many years the office of Alderman at Nottingham, and who ever continued his interest in the cause of Sunday schools, assisted in the preparation of the select List of Scriptures. In order to encourage the establishment of

Sunday schools and to point out the mode in which they should be conducted, the Committee also published, "A Plan for the Establishment and Regulation of Sunday Schools," prepared by Messrs. Marriott and Gurney.

Another early publication of the Union deserves especial notice. Pursuant to one of the rules, a sermon was annually preached to the Members of the Union,—that in 1804, by the Rev. George Burder, and that in 1805, by the Rev. Jabez (afterwards Dr.) Bunting, in New Court Chapel, from Nehemiah vi. 3, "I am doing a great work." This sermon excited great interest. It was printed and went through three editions, the circulation of which was very beneficial. It was so clear and cogent that it produced immediate effect.

The following affords an interesting illustration.

A Gentleman travelling into the country on business, shortly after this sermon was printed, took one in his pocket. In a town he passed through, where there was no Sunday school, he called on a lady who, as he heard, laid herself out for usefulness, and suggested the importance of instituting one. Various difficulties were started, which he endeavoured to remove. At parting he put into her hands the printed sermon which he called for by appointment in the afternoon, when she informed him, that after reading that sermon she could no longer hesitate; that she had accordingly been round to several of her poor neighbours to invite their children to attend the next morning; and (opening the door into the room next to that in which they were sitting), she showed him that she had already furnished it with such forms as she could procure.

The increasing pressure of professional engagements, and the failure of health, having compelled Mr. Gurney to resign the office of Secretary, it was filled for a short time by Mr. John Edwards and Mr. J. Heard.

They were succeeded by Mr. J. Aspin, a teacher in the Clerkenwell Parochial School.

In the year 1810, the attention of the Union was occupied by the new modes of instruction introduced by Mr. Joseph Lancaster, in his daily school, with a view to ascertain to what extent they

could be made available in Sunday Schools. At the request of the Committee, Mr. Lancaster delivered a lecture in Silver Street Chapel, on the mode of collective teaching recommended by him. At the quarterly general meeting in April of that year, it was resolved, that at the general meeting in July the propriety of introducing into Sunday Schools Mr. Lancaster's plan of teaching children to read, by means of spelling and writing on slates, should be fully discussed. The subject was accordingly brought forward, and in the course of the discussion it was announced that such a plan had been adopted in the Sunday School of Sion Chapel during the preceding four months, and that the children were found to make very considerable progress in the art of spelling and reading, though many teachers had, in consequence, seceded from the institution. At the close of the discussion the following proposition was put to the meeting and carried by a majority of one vote:—"That it be recommended to the teachers in the Schools connected with this Union not to adopt Mr. Lankester's plan on the Lord's day, the same being considered as a breach of the sanctity of that day."

Though the practice of writing on the Lord's day was thus objected to, many teachers felt disposed to avail themselves of the improvement suggested by Mr. Lankester in the mode of teaching to read. In order to this a set of lessons for pasting on boards was prepared by the teachers connected with the Clerkenwell Parochial Sunday Schools, and sold for the benefit of that institution. These lessons, under the name of the Clerkenwell Lessons, obtained an extensive circulation.

In the year 1810, the Committee were strongly urged to publish the lessons of their two Spelling and Reading Books in sheets. It was stated that it was impossible to use the collective system with books merely, and that many teachers being unwilling to exclude works which they so highly esteemed, were delaying the introduction of the plan, in the hope that the Committee would publish the lessons on sheets. Books could be lent to the children for use at home, and thus the lessons they learned at school might be beneficial to their families as well as to themselves. A Sub-Committee was therefore appointed to

prepare for publication a set of lessons for collective teaching, from the First Spelling Book. This was the first step taken by the Committee towards the introduction of the collective system of teaching, to which in subsequent years they have devoted continued and anxious attention; deeply convinced that it is calculated to make the attainment of the art of reading more easy for the scholar, to relieve the teacher from much labour, and to afford time and opportunities for imparting religious instruction. Great, however, as are the advantages of the system, and much as the knowledge of it has been extended, its use has not yet become universal.

The discussions connected with this subject and the decision to which the Committee came, induced Mr. Aspin to resign the office of Secretary. His place was supplied by Mr. William Freeman Lloyd, a young man of nineteen, who had already given strong evidence of his attachment to Sunday School labours. He was the son of a cloth manufacturer at Uley, in Gloucestershire, where he was born, on the 22nd December, 1791. His father was a deacon of the Independent Church there, and his mother descended from a long line of pious ancestors, among them the Rev. Joshua Head, one of the ejected ministers. He was educated at Oxford by the late Rev. James Hinton, from whose pious counsels he derived much spiritual advantage. In his fifteenth year he commenced the employment of a Sunday school teacher by assisting in the instruction of a junior class at Oxford. Removing shortly afterwards to London, he still adhered to the work in which he had engaged, and joined some individuals of a kindred spirit who had opened a Sunday school in the degraded neighbourhood of Saffron Hill. He afterwards established another at Haberdashers' Hall. Towards the close of the year 1808, Mr. Lloyd became a member of the Rev. Dr. Winter's church in New Court, Carey Street. He still continued his Sunday School labours, while he expressed his regret that no such institution was connected with the church of which he had just become a member. After some time he brought the subject before his minister and fellow members. It was instantly taken into consideration, and so warmly supported, that on the 3rd

December, 1809, the New Court Sunday School was opened. Though young in years, yet having had some acquaintance with the nature and management of such institutions, he was requested by those friends with whom he was now associated, to undertake the offices of Superintendent and Secretary, and to which desire he acceded.

It was on the 19th December, 1810, that Mr. Lloyd was requested to undertake the office of Secretary to the Sunday School Union, the duties of which he immediately proceeded to discharge, with an untiring energy, from which the Union and its associated schools derived the most extensive benefit.

In the year 1812, the first public meeting of the Union was held, when a report of its proceedings from the commencement was read. From that report it appeared that the following had been its only publications :—

“A Plan for the Establishment and Regulation of Sunday Schools,” of which one edition had been printed.

“An Introduction to Reading, part the first,” of which 150,000 copies had been printed.

The same in a series of lessons for collective teaching.

“An Introduction to Reading, part the second,” of which 85,000 had been printed.

A Catechism, in verse, entitled, “Milk for Babes,” of which 38,000 copies had been printed.

“A select list of Scripture, designed as a Guide to Teachers, for a course of reading in Sunday Schools.”

At the annual meeting, in May, 1813, Mr. William Jones, who subsequently became the Corresponding Secretary and Superintendent of the Religious Tract Society, was elected on the Committee, and in the September following, Mr. Richard Jones was appointed Secretary with Mr. Lloyd. Writing copies, taken from Scripture, were published by the Committee during this year.

In the month of May, 1814, Mr. Thomas Thompson joined the Committee, and at the same time Mr. Henry Althans was introduced as Secretary to the newly formed East London Auxiliary. In the course of the year the third part Spelling

Book, consisting entirely of words for Spelling Lessons, was added to the publications of the Union.

In the following year, Mr. John Edwards being appointed Joint Secretary of the Committee, with an especial view to his superintending the printing and book department, accepted office in the month of July, but resigned in the December following, under "a full conviction," as he states in his letter of resignation, "that the nature and extent of its duties are much too great to be properly discharged by any gentleman of your Committee, without such a sacrifice of time as cannot reasonably be expected from any individual whatsoever." The sales of the Society's publications at that time amounted to about £1,000 per annum.

At the annual meeting in the year 1816, Mr. John Wheelton, who has since served the honourable office of Sheriff of London and Middlesex, was elected on the Committee. In the month of November in that year, Mr. Thomas Challis, who has held the offices of Lord Mayor of London, and Member of Parliament for the Borough of Finsbury, and who has for some years been the Treasurer of the Union, was reported to the Committee as Secretary to the North London Auxiliary, in which capacity he for some time attended its meetings.

In the year 1817, Mr. Althans was elected Secretary, and Mr. Joseph Butterworth, M.P., was appointed a member of the Committee. The evening for the monthly meetings of the Committee was fixed for the third Friday of the month, which has not since been varied, and two sets of lessons for the scholars of the lowest classes were published.

Mr. Robert Latter, who, as Finance Secretary, watched over the pecuniary interests of the Union for many years with care and diligence, and Mr. William Bugby, one of Mr. Gurney's scholars in the school at Walworth, to which reference has been already made, were in the year 1818 elected on the Committee; and Messrs. Butterworth and Thompson were created honorary members, as a testimony of the esteem entertained for their exertions in the promotion of Sunday School Institutions, although they were unable to take an active part

in the proceedings of the Union. Mr. J. A. Brown, who afterwards became one of the Secretaries for managing the Depository, was also returned as a representative by the North London Auxiliary. Mr. R. Jones resigned his office as Secretary in July of that year, and in the following September Mr. Edward McCoy was invited to fill his place. The following resolution, adopted by the Committee at their July Meeting, will prove that the Union was not founded on a principle of indifference to the fundamental doctrines of the Gospel:—Resolved, “That an answer be sent to a question of the Committee of the North London Auxiliary, that it is the decided opinion of this Committee that no Socinian Sunday School should be admitted into connexion with any Sunday School Union.”

During the year 1818, the Committee divided their Spelling Book into four parts, and published a Reading Book, consisting of extracts from the sacred Scriptures.

The most important occurrence of the year, however, was the establishment of a depository for the sale of books and requisites for Sunday Schools. Up to this period the publications of the Union had been sold by a bookseller on behalf of the Committee; in the first instance by Mr. Kent, of High Holborn, exclusively, and subsequently by him in conjunction with Mr. Hamilton, of Paternoster Row. The Committee had long desired to have the means of increasing the circulation of their own publications, and to be enabled to provide for Sunday Schools such other publications as might appear suitable. They at length entered into an agreement with Mr. John Offer, Bookseller, 44, Newgate Street, for the use of a part of his shop, and there opened a depository for the sale of approved publications adapted for Sunday Schools. The catalogue then prepared comprised—first, school books, lessons, &c.; secondly, books for Sunday School teachers; and it was proposed to extend it, so as to embrace a collection of select reward books read and approved by the Committee.

The following were some of the advantages contemplated by this measure—furnishing Sunday Schools with lists and prices

of such books, &c., as they might be constantly in the habit of using ; supplying Sunday School Unions, and through them the schools, with needful books, &c., at the lowest possible prices ; selecting suitable books, read and approved by the Committee, to the exclusion of those which were objectionable ; saving time and trouble, by the whole order being completed at one place and immediately despatched to its destination ; establishing a centre of communication and influence and of information for the whole metropolis, the country at large, and, if possible, for the whole world. A Sub-Committee was appointed to manage the affairs of the Depository ; and in order to ensure, as far as possible, the sale and publication of suitable books only, it was agreed that the approval of three members of the Committee should be had before a book could be placed in the catalogue for sale, and that the approval of six members and the Secretaries should be obtained to any work which was to be published by the Union.

Amongst the works thus placed in the catalogue for sale, although not then published by the Union, were—The Church of England Catechism, Dr. Watts' First, Second, and Historical Catechism, Brown's Short Catechism, The Assembly's, with and without proofs from Scripture, and Thomas Wood's Methodist Catechism. At a subsequent period the Committee undertook the publication of all these, as also of the Baptist Catechism with and without Scripture proofs. It must be clear to every mind that the Union could not be considered as giving any recommendation to these works, which contained such opposite views on the questions in dispute between pædo-Baptists and Anti-pædo Baptists, as well as between Arminians and Calvinists. Doubtless their sale and publication were an exception to the rule which has always been acted upon with respect to all other books. These were, however, placed on the catalogue, and afterwards published, on the ground that they were necessary to the conducting the School, and that a Depository would be incomplete if it did not furnish them. Had the Committee refused to sell these publications they would have been using their influence against the practice of teaching

religious truth by the aid of printed catechisms, which they were not disposed to do. Doubtless the sale of them was open to the objection, that by this means the Union was instrumental in diffusing error to a greater or less degree ; but if such an objection were allowed to prevail, all association between Christians entertaining different religious views must cease. It was also considered, that as these works carried with them their distinctive character, no one could be misled, and that they were purchased and used by those only who approved of the sentiments they contained.

The publication and sale of these catechisms proceeded without interruption until the year 1843, when, in consequence of the introduction of " A Bill for regulating the employment of children and young persons in factories, and for the better education of children in factory districts," by which it was provided that the catechism and liturgy of the Church of England, were to be used in the schools proposed to be established, and the children were to attend school three hours on a Sunday, and to attend public worship according to the rites of the Established Church, attention was drawn to the earnestness with which many of the clergy of the Church of England were inculcating the sentiments that baptismal regeneration was a doctrine of that Church, and one which it was their duty to teach with diligence. One of the grounds upon which they rested that opinion was the statement contained in the catechism, where in answer to the question " Who gave you this name ?" the party catechised is required to answer, " My godfather and godmother, in my baptism, wherein I was made a member of Christ, the child of God, and an inheritor of the kingdom of Heaven." The strong conviction felt that such a doctrine was opposed to the word of God and was of fatal consequences to the spiritual interests of man, had added much to the hatred felt towards the government measure, by which it was believed the teaching of this dogma would be greatly increased. The question was thus raised in various quarters whether it was proper that the catechism in question should be published and sold by the Union, and the Committee were compelled to entertain the question by

a memorial being presented to them from one of the associated schools requesting them to discontinue the sale of the Church of England Catechism. It was at once perceived that this desire could not be complied with unless the Committee were prepared to abandon the sale of all catechisms the doctrines of which they could not unitedly recommend, because the exclusion of one from the catalogue on the ground of its containing error would render the Committee answerable for the sentiments contained in the others. They therefore referred the question to the consideration of a numerous sub-committee, and on their report the following resolutions were adopted at the meeting of the Committee in August, 1843.

“That this Committee having carefully considered whether or not the Society should continue to publish or sell the Church of England, Assembly’s, and Baptist Catechisms, now placed upon its catalogue, are of opinion, that no alteration should be made in this respect, because the sale of such catechisms at its depository is in strict accordance with its constitution and rules, has been continued for a considerable period, forms an important part of its trade, affords facilities to those who purchase its other publications or Sunday school requisites, calls for no compromise of individual religious sentiments, and is an example of mutual forbearance, which serves to strengthen the existing union among the different religious bodies of which it is composed.

“That a notice be prefixed to the list of Catechisms in the catalogue, that ‘the Committee of the Sunday School Union keep these Catechisms on sale for the convenience of Sunday School teachers, but do not express any opinion on the theological sentiments contained therein.’ ”

Notwithstanding the adoption of these resolutions the agitation still continued, and in order to ascertain the views of their constituents, the Committee invited a Conference with the Committees of the four London Auxiliaries. At this meeting the proceedings of the Committee were stated. and as many present expressed a desire to state their views, the Conference was adjourned and three subsequent meetings were held in the

course of which the question was fully discussed. About 200 persons on an average attended the Conferences, of whom 51 took part in the proceedings, 23 in favour of Catechisms being continued as usual, and 28 expressing their desire that their sale should be discontinued. It was, however, generally agreed that if one Catechism were removed from the catalogue on the ground of its containing sentiments to which some of the members of the Union objected, the whole must be examined, and such only retained which the Committee could unitedly recommend. The proceedings at these meetings, as well as other communications, gave evidence of such a divided opinion, that the Committee did not feel at liberty to alter a long established practice which they did not themselves consider wrong, without some distinct proof that such alteration was called for by a large majority of their constituents. They therefore reported the facts to the general meeting at which a resolution was adopted :

“That the Committee for the last year having left undecided the question relative to the continued sale of denominational Catechisms, this meeting of the constituent body hereby recommend the Committee now chosen to discontinue at the earliest practicable period the publication and sale at the Union Depository of all denominational formularies.”

It will be perceived that this resolution did not in any way trench upon the catholic character of the Union. The sale of denominational formularies had always constituted an exception to the principle rigidly adhered to with respect to all the other publications of the Society, but was considered to be justified on the grounds already stated. The Committee on taking into consideration the resolution of the general meeting, did not, therefore, feel any difficulty in carrying it out, whatsoever opinion they themselves entertained as to its necessity or expediency. The Catechisms in the Union catalogue were examined, and the publication and sale of the following were discontinued. The Church of England Catechism ; the Baptist Catechism, with and without Scripture proofs ; the Assembly's Catechism, with and without Scripture proofs ; Brown's Short Catechism, Dr. Watts' Second Catechism, with and without Scripture proofs. The

Collects were also found to be denominational formularies, and their sale was therefore discontinued.

The effect of this measure on the trade of the Union was more injurious than had been anticipated. The average sale of Catechisms amounted to above 170,000 copies yearly, and a general impression prevailed that the sale of all Catechisms would be discontinued. Although this was not the case, the demand for those still remaining in the catalogue was much lessened. The Committee, however, continued to publish and sell The Little Childs' Catechism, Milk for Babes, Dr. Watts' 1st and Historical Catechisms; they also kept for sale The Catechism of Scripture Biography and Scripture History, Lloyd's Bible Catechism, Lloyd's Catechism on the Evidences of the Bible in easy Rhymes, and Lloyd's Catechism on the principal parables of the New Testament. At subsequent periods attempts were made to prepare Catechisms which might be properly published by the Union in the place of Dr. Watts' Second Catechism, and the Assembly's Catechism, but so many difficulties arose that the design has never been prosecuted to a successful result.

CHAPTER III.

PROGRESS OF THE UNION FROM 1819 TO 1831.—IMPROVEMENTS IN
THE METHOD OF IMPARTING ELEMENTARY INSTRUCTION.

CONTENTS :—Official Changes noted—Extension of the Influence of the Depository—Reward Books for Scholars—"The Little Child's Catechism"—Depository removed to No. 19, Paternoster Row—Secretariat Remodelled—Death of Mr. Butterworth, M.P., and Election of the Earl of Roden as President—Depository removed to No. 5, Paternoster Row—Mr. Gall's System—Detailed Account of Proceedings—Effect on the Plans and Publications of the Union—Publications for the Blind.

THE narration of the circumstances which led to the removal of all denominational formularies from the catalogue of books published and sold by the Union, has carried us forward several years, and renders it necessary to return to a variety of interesting events which preceded that removal.

In the year 1819, Mr. Marriott, who had occupied the situation of treasurer from the formation of the Union, devoting himself with great assiduity to the carrying out its objects, retired from that office. Mr. Butterworth was requested to supply his place, which he consented to do, but took no part in the proceedings of the Society beyond that of presiding at its annual meetings. This duty he discharged for several years with great satisfaction to those assembled, and much benefit to the Union.

It was during this year that the North London Auxiliary sent as one of their representatives to the Committee, Mr. Peter Jackson, to whose quiet but persevering labours, combined with his great practical knowledge as Depository Secretary for thirty-one years, the Union is indebted for a very large share of its present prosperity. Mr. Joshua Russell, who subsequently entered into the Ministry, from the active duties of which he

has recently retired, was, at this period, elected on the Committee. It was thought desirable that permanent auditors of the accounts should be appointed, and, as the increase of trade rendered additional capital necessary, one loan of £50 was accepted from Mr. Thomas Thompson, and another of £100 from Mr. Henry Teape, the printer to the Union, to whom the Committee already owed great obligations for his liberality in allowing them the extended credit which their limited means required.

The attention of the Committee was much occupied in the year 1821, by numerous arrangements connected with the depository. Up to this period the privilege of purchasing the books published and sold by the Union had been confined to schools connected with it, but as the Committee were now endeavouring to supply schools with all that was necessary for carrying them on, it was thought desirable, both for the welfare of the schools and for the interests of the Society, that there should not be any hindrance to the free use of the advantages thus offered. It was therefore resolved, that for the future the depository should be open for the furnishing all Sunday schools with the publications of the Union at the lowest scale of prices for ready money. This liberality has produced the desired result. The increased circulation of the Society's publications has enabled the Committee to supply them at a cheaper rate than could otherwise be done, so that the connected schools have thus also received benefit. Greater interest has been excited in the operations of the Union, and its works find their way into many schools, the teachers of which do not officially connect themselves with it; and thus, it is trusted, much advantage is gained by the scholars.

The increasing property of the Society drew the attention of the Committee to the importance of providing for its security. With this view it was agreed that the property should be vested in three trustees, who should hold it at the disposal of the Committee. The individuals first selected to fill that office were Mr. Lloyd, Mr. Stephen Winnill, the superintendent of the School belonging to St. Swithin's Church, and who was for

many years an active member of the Committee, and Mr. David Niven, who had for a long period been connected with the Union. At a subsequent period the number of trustees was increased to five.

The Committee had commenced the publication of reward books for scholars, but at this period determined to discontinue the practice, and to confine their attention to supplying Sunday Schools with the essential requisites for their operations, preparing at the same time a selected list of suitable reward-books, which should always be kept on sale at the Depository. The importance of such selection was clearly proved by the circumstance that more than one half of the books submitted for the examination of the Committee, all which professed to be designed expressly for the young, were deemed unsuitable for use in Sunday Schools. The arrangement thus made has been ever since acted upon with great advantage. The reward books issued by the Religious Tract Society, and by other publishers, have enabled the Committee to place on their catalogue an ample supply of suitable works. As each book so placed on the catalogue required the favourable attestation of three members of the Committee, the labour thus undertaken was considerable ; but it has been cheerfully given, from a persuasion that a great benefit was thereby conferred upon teachers, who may place implicit confidence in the suitability of the books they there purchase. The books thus examined and certified exceed 1,500 in number, so that there is ample opportunity for selection. The Committee have themselves derived some advantage from the arrangement. The labour and responsibility attending the preparation of new works was spared, and the limited capital of the Union has remained disposable for purposes which could not otherwise have been realized.

Up to this time the affairs of the Depository had been superintended by an officer called a representative, who was paid for his services, but it was now agreed that this duty should be provided for gratuitously. Mr. J. A. Brown was requested to act as Minute-Secretary to the Depository Sub-Committee, and Mr. Jackson to take the superintendence of the printing and

publishing department. From this period the whole of the officers have conducted the business of the Union without remuneration.

Mr. Lloyd having prepared a work, designed to impart the leading truths of Christianity to the youthful mind, in the form of rhymes, which it was hoped would be readily learnt and retained in the memory, presented the copyright to the Committee, by whom it was published in the year 1822, under the title of "The Little Child's Catechism." It met with much acceptance on the part of teachers, and has had an extensive circulation. A Sub-Committee was appointed to prepare a small work on Arithmetic, in order to assist in conducting week evening services for the benefit of those scholars who were deprived of the advantage of weekly instruction.

Mr. Althans, having resigned his situation as one of the Secretaries to the Union, the vacancy was supplied at the general meeting of the year 1823, by the appointment of Mr. W. H. Watson, who had filled a similar office in the Newington, Lambeth, and Camberwell Branch of the South London Auxiliary, from its formation in 1818. At the close of the year Mr. Butterworth intimated his unwillingness to continue to hold the office of Treasurer, but as the Committee were very reluctant to lose his services, they requested him to accept the presidency of the Union, which would preserve his connection with it, while it would not involve any responsibility. To this proposal he agreed, and was accordingly elected President at the general meeting in 1824. Mr. David Nevin was appointed Treasurer in his stead.

A further advance was now made towards the formation of an independent establishment. Hitherto Mr. Offer had been considered the Depository of the Union, but it was found that the increasing business required that it should be conducted separately from any other. An arrangement was therefore made with him for conducting the business by an agent of the Society. It was, however, soon found, that the rapidly extending business required enlarged accommodation, and in March, 1824, the Committee resolved to take the premises, No. 19,

Paternoster Row, for the purposes of the Society. On this occasion the recent progress of the Union was ascertained. It has been already stated that the whole number of copies of publications sold by the Union in the first nine years of its existence, was about 273,000, while the annual sale now amounted to 578,685, the cash value of which was £2,964. 8s. 10d.

At the commencement of the year 1826, Mr. Lloyd communicated to the Committee his inability to devote so much time as he had heretofore done to the concerns of the Union, and therefore tendered his resignation of his office of Secretary, expressing, at the same time, his willingness to serve the Society as far as he was able. It was thereupon resolved, "That this Committee cannot even reflect on the prospect of losing any portion of Mr. Lloyd's valuable services without expressing earnestly and unitedly their grateful sense of the important benefits which the Society and the cause of Sunday schools have received from his devoted and efficient attention during a long series of years." He was requested to continue his services as Foreign Secretary, and Mr. Watson to undertake the Home correspondence, in addition to his duties as Minute Secretary; and at the ensuing annual meeting the Secretaries were designated in their appointment by the departments they respectively occupied. At the same time Messrs Brown and Jackson, the Secretaries to the Depository Sub-Committee, were added to the list of the General Secretaries of the Union.

As the increasing business of the Union was gradually enabling the Committee to make that addition to its capital which was thus required, they felt desirous that no doubt should exist as to the exact state of the Society's affairs. They, therefore, resolved, that the amount of the capital should be stated, and the balance sheet published with the report, which course has been followed by every succeeding Committee, so that the financial condition of the Union may be known by every one who thinks proper to refer to the annual report.

In consequence of the President being absent from town, his place at the Annual Meeting, the chair, was filled by Thomas Pellatt, Esq.; and at the meeting of the Committee in July, the

Secretaries had the mournful duty of communicating the intelligence of his decease. It was immediately resolved "That the Committee of the Sunday School Union wish to record on their minutes the deep sense they entertain of the devoted services of their late President, Joseph Butterworth, Esq., in promoting the cause of Sunday schools with distinguished personal zeal, personal exertion and liberality, for many years. While they bow with submission to the mysterious dispensation of Divine Providence by which he was called from his sphere of usefulness, they express their conviction that his works will follow him, and they trust that his example will long be remembered, and prove a powerful stimulus to all their fellow labourers." This resolution was communicated to Mr. Butterworth's family, and inserted in the Sunday School Teachers' Magazine.

The cause of Sunday schools sustained other losses during this year ; among which the names of William Fox, Esq., the founder of the Sunday School Society, and Mr. Stephen Winnill, one of the early friends of the Union and one of its trustees, deserve to be recorded.

The only other events of the year requiring notice were the resignation of Mr. Brown as Minute Secretary to the Depository, and the appointment of Mr. C. E. Greenwood in his place. Mr. Brown still continued a member of the Committee.

In the year 1827, the place of the late President was supplied by the Right Honourable the Earl of Roden, whose devoted attachment to Sunday schools, together with his personal exertions on their behalf, peculiarly qualified him for the vacant office.

The increase of the business of the Depository rendered it necessary for the Committee to take more commodious premises. They accordingly removed to No. 5, Paternoster Row, which was found well adapted for the meetings of the Committee, and for the general business of the Society.

In the following year four small works, intended as presents to scholars on leaving school, were prepared and published. Mr. McCoy, also, resigned his office as Finance Secretary, and was succeeded by Mr. Greenwood, who retained that position

until 1831, when Mr. Robert Latter supplied his place. In that year Mr. George L. Olding, who had become a member of the Committee in 1823, was elected a trustee. He was diligent and faithful in the discharge of the duties he had thus undertaken, and for several years presided at the meetings of the Committee. On his decease, on September 25, 1841, Mr. Latter was appointed trustee in his stead.

Towards the close of the year 1828, the Committee entered into correspondence with Mr. James Gall, of Edinburgh, on the subject of the system of religious instruction contained in his work, entitled, "The End and Essence of Sabbath School Teaching," and understanding he was about to visit London, they invited him to explain his views to the teachers of the metropolis.

Mr. Gall accordingly met the Committee on the 20th March, 1829, when it was agreed, that classes of children should be formed for the purpose of enabling him to exhibit practically, the lesson-system of teaching. A Sub-Committee of seven was appointed to carry the resolution into effect, and to observe the progress of the experiment. In order to afford the fullest and most minute opportunity for investigation, it was also agreed, that all the meetings should be public, and the Committee circulated notices through the schools of London and its vicinity inviting the attendance of teachers in general, to witness the mode adopted by Mr. Gall in training the minds of the children.

In pursuance of the above appointment, and at Mr. Gall's request, some of the least informed scholars in one of the largest schools in London were selected, who were carefully and individually examined. From these three boys and three girls, who were the most ignorant, and who seemed altogether unacquainted with the principles of Christianity, were formed into a class, and trained by Mr. Gall for thirteen evenings, about an hour each evening. The children received the little book denominated "The First Step," and "The second Initiatory Catechism," with the Exercises," to look over at home.

That the experiment might be more satisfactory and complete,

Mr. Gall requested that, if possible, children should be procured somewhat resembling the heathen, whose intellectual and moral attainments did not extend beyond their knowledge of natural objects, and whose feelings and obligations were, of course, regulated principally by coercion and fear of punishment.

Two of the Committee, therefore, undertook the search, and at last procured from the streets three children, a boy and two girls, of the ages, so far as could be ascertained (for they themselves could not tell), of seven, nine, and eleven years. These children had no knowledge of letters, knew no more than the name of God, and that He was in the skies, but could not tell anything about Him, or what He had done. They knew not who made the sun, or the world, or themselves. They had no idea of a soul, or that they should live after death. One had a confused idea of the name of Jesus as connected with prayer, which, however, she did not understand, but had never heard of Adam, Noah, or Abraham. When asked if they knew anything of Moses, one of them instantly recollected the name, but when examined, it was found she only referred to the term usually applied to the old clothes' men of London. They had no idea of a Saviour, had no knowledge of heaven or hell, had never heard of Christ, and were ignorant whether the name belonged to a man or woman. The boy, when strictly interrogated on this point, and asked if he knew nothing at all of Jesus Christ, replied, with much earnestness, and in a manner that showed the state of his mind, "No, upon my soul, I do not." With these three children Mr. Gall met publicly for eleven days, and trained them during one hour each day.

Three of the most intelligent girls of the school from which the first class were selected, of the respective ages of eleven, twelve, and sixteen, were chosen to form a third class, and were instructed in the nature and trained to the exercise of prayers as lessons only, and not as devotional exercises. They were also requested to provide for themselves two little children, to be instructed by them in the principles of the Christian religion, from the key to the "First Initiatory Catechism." About half an hour each evening was devoted to this class.

As much of the value of the experiment depended on ascertaining the natural abilities and acquired habits of the children previous to its commencement, the Sub-Committee endeavoured during the time occupied by the exercises to form a correct estimate of both. The natural capacities of the six children composing the first class were obviously and considerably below mediocrity. Some idea of this may be formed from the fact that some had been at school seven years, and none fewer than five years, and yet remained in the state of ignorance already mentioned. Their previous habits of mental wandering and inattention were also conspicuous, and appeared in three of them to be exceedingly inveterate. The natural abilities of the three children in the second class were better, and might be considered a fair average of children in general. The members of the third class evidently possessed a higher order of intellect, and eagerly and rapidly acquired the knowledge of all that was taught them.

In order to afford the teachers throughout London and its vicinity an opportunity of witnessing the results of Mr. Gall's labours, a public meeting was held in each of the four Auxiliary Unions, when the lesson system of teaching was explained by him, and illustrated by the examination of the first and second classes of children thus trained, and on the 16th of April a special meeting of the Committee was held for the purpose of examining the children, and ascertaining by minute and accurate investigation the result of this important experiment.

A list of forty-four doctrines, which had been taught to the first six children from the First and Second Initiatory Catechisms, had been previously supplied to each member of the Committee, that they might be the better prepared to ascertain whether the scholars really understood them, and after a careful examination by the chairman, Mr. Gall, and others, the Committee were quite satisfied that a correct knowledge and understanding of them all had been acquired.

The children were next examined from the "First Step," or Old Testament History, from the time of Adam to the death of Moses, of the leading circumstances of which they had obtained

an accurate idea in chronological order, and showed a delightful aptitude in drawing from them those practical lessons which are taught by these historical facts. The most interesting branch of this part of their examination, however, was their application of the several lessons which they had previously learned from the Scripture history.

The second class was next examined minutely and individually on the leading doctrines of Christianity. The enumeration and illustration of the several doctrines were given with a simplicity and in a language peculiarly their own, showing that they had acquired a clear knowledge of the several truths. They were also examined on some parts of the Old Testament history, from which they also drew practical lessons in a manner similar to the former class.

The third class were then examined on the nature and practice of prayer. They showed great skill in comprehending and defining the several component parts of prayer, as adoration, confession, thanksgiving, invocation, petition, &c. They first gave examples of each separately, and then with great facility made selections from each division in its order, which they gave consecutively. They then turned several lessons and passages of Scripture into prayer, and the chairman and several of the gentlemen present read to them passages from various parts of the Bible, which they readily classified, as taught in the "Questions on Prayer," and turned into adoration, petition, confession, or thanksgiving, according to their nature, and as they appeared best suited for each. Some of the texts were of mixed, and even of a complicated nature; but in every case, and where they were not previously acquainted with the passages, they divided them into parts, and referred each of them to its proper class, as in the more simple verses.

A little child, who was taught solely from Mr. Gall's Catechisms by one of those girls, was next examined, and showed a distinct knowledge of the principal truths of the Gospel. The young teacher, whose labours appeared so successful in communicating a knowledge of the Christian doctrines to this child of six or seven years of age, on being

questioned as to her mode of teaching, stated to the Committee, that her pupil repeated the words from the "First Initiatory Catechism," while she catechised her by the cross questions from the "Key" to that book, making her to find out the answers in her own mind from the words she had used.

The Committee, having thus carefully watched the progress of the experiment, convened a public meeting of the teachers and friends of Sunday Schools, at the Poultry Chapel, on Wednesday, the 22nd of April, at which the Rev. John Clayton presided, and an account of Mr. Gall's proceedings during the month was read. The classes above mentioned, and the little girl who had been taught by one of her elder schoolfellows, were then separately examined by Mr. Gall, to the interest and delight of the assembly. It was thought due to Mr. Gall to prepare a detailed statement of his labours, which was printed and circulated at the ensuing Annual Meeting, and in which the Committee, expressed their deliberate conviction, "That this system of teaching is eminently simple in its details, and well calculated to excite the attention and strengthen and expand the mind. That by its means truth is speedily and permanently conveyed to the understanding, and retained in the memory, and children are enabled to convert all they learn into practical use ; in which consists the great peculiarity of the system, by drawing from it subjects for prayer, and lessons to guide them in their general conduct, while the application of the lesson to the common occurrences of life tends to revive all these upon the mind, to enlighten the conscience, and to prompt to duty."

It may be thought that the preceding detail has been too minute for a historical narrative, but this impression will be removed upon more attentive consideration. These proceedings bear a strong testimony to the importance of such an institution as the Sunday School Union. Had this not existed there would have been no means of bringing before the attention of the teachers the plans recommended by Mr. Gall, and the schools would have been deprived of the advantages they thus obtained. The result of Mr. Gall's labours were very con-

siderable. The interrogative system of teaching had been already partially used by teachers, and they had sought to draw lessons of practical utility from their instructions; but Mr. Gall's lesson-system not only included all that such teachers had done, but extended much further, by supplying the method through which they might train their scholars in a progressive manner to draw lessons from the subjects selected for instruction, to give reasons for all the truths that might come under their notice, and to turn the whole, both in their devotional exercises and general conduct, into practical use. Many teachers, therefore, introduced the system, as a whole, into their schools; and very many more, without going so far, yet availed themselves of the principles laid down, and by this means improved the intellectual and practical character of their instructions.

But the strongest motive for thus fully recording the results of Mr. Gall's efforts, is the influence they had on the operations of the Union. It is to those efforts that the improvements made in several of the publications of the Society must be attributed. One of the first acts of the Committee nominated at the Annual Meeting, in the year 1829, was the appointment of a Sub-Committee, to consider what improvements could be made in the elementary publications of the Union. That Sub-Committee held no less than one hundred meetings. Materials for a new system of progressive elementary instruction, adapted to Sunday School classification, were collected, and a separate book compiled for each of the first three classes of scholars, entitled, *The First, Second, and Third Class Books*. The lessons in these books consist of a threefold exercise of reading, spelling, and catechism; or one continued series of short, simple, and instructive sentences, without columns of unconnected syllables or words, or any cumbrous appendages. Books of Exercises on the Lessons, as an assistance to teachers in the third part of the exercise belonging to this new system of elementary instruction, were also published, and a very large circulation rewarded the labour thus bestowed. At a subsequent period, probably in the year 1844, in consequence of the great

success which had attended the introduction of boxes of moveable letters, to which reference will be hereafter made, in rendering the acquisition of the art of reading more easy to the younger scholars, the Committee were led to examine with care in what way it was that the scholars were so much assisted. It appeared very much to arise from the largeness of the type used, and from the letters and words being set up individually, so that the attention of the scholars was more completely fixed, and the forms of the letters were more readily and firmly imprinted upon the memory. The suggestion then arose whether the principle could not be advantageously adopted with respect to the Class Books. It was true that the necessity for such elementary works was being greatly diminished by the extension of general education, which rendered the teaching the art of reading in Sunday Schools less essential, but there was still found a very large number of scholars whom it was important to assist. It is also most desirable that young persons should not be merely able to read, but to do so with fluency ; otherwise, they will feel a reluctance in future life to take up a book when the reading, and especially the reading it aloud, is attended with difficulty. The Committee thought they should be doing well, therefore, to apply the same principle to the Class Books. The First Class Books were printed in a type somewhat smaller than the moveable letters. Thus, instead of the scholars being removed at once from the use of a very large type to that of an ordinary book, the change was but small, the page contained few lines, and the unpractised eye of the scholar was not confused by a large body of type. One instance occurred to illustrate the wisdom of the alteration. An application having been made for the admission of a new scholar, the superintendent, in order to ascertain whether the child could read, put into his hands the old edition of the First Class Book, which he was unable to decipher. The improved edition was then put before him, and he was able to read it without difficulty. The Second Class Book was printed in a type somewhat smaller than the First, thus gradually bringing the scholar forward ; after having passed through the gradations

of the letter-box, and the First and Second Class Books, he was able without difficulty to use the Third Class Book, the type of which remained unaltered. The First Class Book was also printed in a set of large lessons, mounted on boards, for collective teaching. An adult Reading Book was prepared and published, in which the type of the lesson is graduated in like manner, and in which the syllables are divided, and some other assistance is given to those who have unhappily arrived at adult age without having even acquired, or having for want of exercise lost, the art of reading.

The attention of the Sub-Committee, who in 1829, prepared these Class Books, was also directed to the Catechisms then published by the Union. In endeavouring to render them more useful in imparting religious knowledge, two important principles were adopted. First, that every answer should form a complete sentence, containing an intelligible proposition independent of the question; and, secondly, that the text committed to memory should be illustrated and enforced by interrogatory exercises. Before attempting improvements, however, the text of Dr. Watts' Catechism was revised from an original edition, and stereotyped to insure accuracy in these new editions. After the process of filling up the answers from the questions, and removing every other obstruction from the learner, exercises were added. These were contained in the improved editions of the three Catechisms of Dr. Watts, besides which the Little Child's Catechism was published on a similar plan.

In the year 1831, the Committee had to lament the loss of their oldest member and Treasurer, Mr. David Niven. His assiduous attendance, his unassuming deportment, and his kind liberality, had much endeared him to his companions in labour. A *Legacy* of £400, free of duty, as well as a previous donation of £100, testified that to the last his attachment to the Union remained unabated. The vacancy thus occasioned was filled up at the following Annual Meeting, by the appointment to the office of Treasurer of Mr. William Brodie Gurney, the founder and first Secretary, who had been compelled by

the pressure of other engagements to relinquish any active exertions on behalf of the Institution, but who was glad to be thus able to renew his connexion with it.

The attention of the Committee was called in the year 1836, to the efforts making to enable the blind to read. They carefully examined the raised characters supplied by Mr. Gall, and satisfied themselves of the practicability of the object being obtained. At a meeting held especially for this purpose, a blind youth read with great facility any portion of the books placed before him, and the Committee felt it their duty to aid in conferring so great a blessing as the art of reading on those who were suffering from loss of sight. They therefore instructed Mr. Gall to print in raised type the First Class Book, considerable numbers of which were sold.

CHAPTER IV.

EFFORTS TO SECURE THE TEACHING OF AN UNIFORM SCRIPTURE LESSON IN SUNDAY SCHOOLS.

CONTENTS :—Publication of Select Lists of Scriptures—High-priced Bibles—Welsh Sunday Schools and the Bible Society—Applications from Union to Bible Society—Reduction in Price—The Universities and the Bible—The Bible for 10d. and the Testament for 4d.—List of Reading Lessons, 1841—The Notes in Teachers' Magazine—Notes on Scripture Lessons—Selections of Scripture Lessons issued by other Societies—Sunday School Teachers' Pocket Book and Diary—The Box of Moveable Letters.

THE two preceding chapters have been principally occupied with details referring to the provision made by the Union for the elementary instruction of the scholars. So deficient was the provision made for the general education of the people, that instruction in the art of reading became an indispensable portion of the instruction imparted in Sunday Schools, in order to enable the scholars to read for themselves the Word of God. But the Committee never considered such elementary instruction as an end, but only as a means for attaining a more important object. While, therefore, they sought to combine religious teaching with every exercise of the school, their aim has always been to render it a religious institution, and their reading books, and class books, and catechisms, have only been considered as steps leading to the sacred Scriptures, as the only and sufficient text book for the teacher. Thus one of the first publications of the Union was, "A Select List of Scriptures, designed as a Guide to Teachers for a course of reading in Sunday Schools;" humble in its character, but greatly important, as showing the nature of the instruction which it was desired should be imparted in these institutions.

In addition to the difficulty on the part of the scholars generally to read the Bible, but which the extension of general

education, and the instruction in Sunday Schools was gradually diminishing, there was another obstacle to its general use, which was very severely felt. The high prices charged for copies of the Scriptures rendered it difficult for parents to purchase them for the use of their children, and imposed a very heavy burden on the teachers, who were compelled to provide copies for use in the school. Hence, in many cases, the Bible was taken to pieces and divided into portions, and almost universally a large portion of the scholars were only allowed to read the New Testament, being grouped in what were called Testament Classes. It was also with a view to meet this difficulty, that the Committee, in the year 1818, prepared a Reading book, consisting of extracts from the Sacred Scriptures.

Still all these plans were but mere palliatives. The object desired and sought after, was, placing in the hands of all the scholars who could read the Bible, a complete copy of the Word of God, and in order to this, external help was required. The Committee remembered that it was the necessities of the Sunday Scholars of Wales, that led to the establishment of the British and Foreign Bible Society,* and they thought that the Sunday Scholars of England had a fair claim for assistance from that institution, and that its funds could not be better applied than in putting the Bible within the reach of those whose teachers would aid them in the study of its contents. Repeated applications were made to the Committee by the conductors of schools who desired to know the best means of procuring copies on the lowest terms. In the year 1822, communications were entered into with the British and Foreign Bible Society, but no indulgence could be obtained beyond permission to the Union, to purchase on the same terms as those on which separate schools were supplied, namely, at cost price. The only advantage hereby gained, was that the schools which had not the means of applying to an Auxiliary Society or Association, could obtain the books through the medium of the Union. The remarkable contrast between the prices of the Scriptures at that period and

* The First Fifty years of the Sunday School, p. 59.

the present, will appear from the fact, that when Bibles and Testaments were, in the year 1824, placed on the catalogue for sale, the reduced prices at which alone the Committee could afford to sell them, were, Nonpareil Bibles, in sheep, 3s. 9d.; Testament, in sheep, 1s. 3d. The regular prices were respectively 5s. and 1s. 6d. These high prices induced the Committee to divide the Bible into several portions for sale.

The anxiety which the Committee felt to encourage the use of the Scriptures in schools, led in the following year to a renewed application to the British and Foreign Bible Society. The request made was, that the Committee might be supplied with Bibles and Testaments for the exclusive use of Sunday Schools, at the following prices :—Nonpareil Bibles, 2s., Brevier Testament, 9d. Had this desire been complied with, Sunday Schools would thus have been enabled to procure copies of the Scriptures for their own use at what was then considered a very moderate price. The request, however, was not wholly complied with, but the Bible Society authorised its Auxiliaries to supply copies of the Scriptures *for School stock exclusively* at the above prices, so that a large number of schools were able to avail themselves of the advantages thus offered. The City of London Auxiliary immediately consented to place a sufficient number of copies at the disposal of the Union on the above terms, by which means the Schools within the City were readily supplied.

At the commencement of the year 1829, the Committee felt themselves under the necessity of renewing their application to the British and Foreign Bible Society. It was found that many schools were unable to avail themselves of the liberal arrangement made, as just stated, on account of there not being any Auxiliary to which they could apply. The Committee of the Bible Society, therefore, consented to supply such schools through the Union, on its guaranteeing the payment for the copies of the Scriptures so furnished, at the rate of 2s. for each Bible, and 9d. for each Testament.

The steady increase in the number of scholars able to read the Scriptures, the burden thrown upon the schools by having to keep up so large a supply for use in school, and the anxiety felt

by teachers that the scholars might have a Bible of their own, led the Committee, in the year 1836, again to seek, that the privilege already granted might be extended, so as to enable scholars to obtain copies for their own use on the same terms. This application was again unsuccessful, but the West London Auxiliary Union formed a Bible fund for this purpose, and in a short time distributed 1,084 Bibles, and 870 Testaments.

The Committee were not, however, disheartened, but feeling year by year the importance that every scholar, able to read the Scriptures, should possess the means of reading them at home, and of preparing for the Scripture subjects which were proposed by the teachers for their examination, they requested their Treasurer, in June 1838, to present personally to the Committee a renewal of the application which, two years previously, had proved unsuccessful. Two of the Secretaries accompanied the Treasurer to the interview, but no favourable result was at that time obtained. The objections made were, that it would involve a greater expense than the funds of the Society could bear, and would have an injurious effect upon Bible Associations. The Committee, however, still held their ground, and after the lapse of a few months, again brought the subject forward; and it having been several times discussed by the Committee of the Bible Society, the difficulties were at length removed, and at the commencement of the year 1840, the request made was not only complied with, but exceeded, inasmuch as the resolution come to, was to supply Sunday Schools with the Nonpareil Bible at 1s. 6d. ; and the Brevier Testament at 6d. The Committee had asked also for a pocket Bible at a reduced price, but this was not granted. In reporting these circumstances to the Annual Meeting, the Committee observed, that in thus reducing the prices of the Scriptures to Sunday Scholars, "The Committee of the British and Foreign Bible Society have acted in a manner most calculated, under the Divine blessing, to carry into effect the objects for which that Society was formed, so far as this Country is concerned. The Scriptures thus circulated, will be read under the direction of pious teachers, they will be studied in connection with the exercises of the school, and the truths

therein contained will be impressed upon the memory, and we trust will also sanctify the heart. In these days, when superstition, and infidelity, and immorality are all presenting their claims to the attention of the young, how can we better secure them than by making them acquainted with that Holy Book, which while it makes known the depravity of human nature, with its cause and its results, at the same time points out the means by which that depravity, with all its attendant evils, may be removed ; which teaches that 'The fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom,' and that 'Godliness is profitable unto all things, having the promise of the life that now is, and of that which is to come.'"

The result of this reduction of price was to create such a demand that, after expending about £14,000 in order to meet it, the Committee of the Bible Society found it necessary to suspend the supply. It was thus clearly shown that a gratuitous circulation was not required, and that if the price of the Scriptures was lowered the purchasers would be greatly increased. The abolition of the exclusive privilege of printing them in Scotland, and the consequent cheapness at which they were sold, led to inquiries whether measures ought not to be adopted for procuring a reduction of price in this country. The University of Oxford, to whom, with that of Cambridge and the Queen's Printer, the privilege of printing the Scriptures is confined, influenced by public opinion, loudly and decisively expressed, announced its willingness to reduce the prices previously charged. The Committee thought it their duty immediately to avail themselves of this opportunity of supplying Sunday Schools with the sacred volume at a reduced price. This also enabled them to provide for the scholars a pocket Bible. The prices were, for the nonpareil Bible, 1s. 9d. ; the brevier Testament, 9d. ; a pocket Bible, 1s. 9d. ; and a reference Bible for teachers, 7s. Since that time the Bible Society have applied themselves diligently to the supply of the home population, and have published the nonpareil and pocket Bible at 10d., and the brevier Testament at 4d., and which the Committee cheerfully undertook to supply to Sunday Schools

without any charge for the expenses incurred by them. More recently the Bible Society have issued a pocket Reference Bible at 1s. 3d. in roan, and 1s. 11d. in morocco, which hardly seems to leave anything to be desired in this respect.

The wondrous facility thus afforded for procuring copies of the Scriptures gave encouragement to the Committee to proceed in their efforts to make pure Bible instruction almost exclusively the object of the teacher's labours on the Lord's-day. It is remarkable that during the very year in which this amazing change had taken place, the Committee were engaged in what appeared to be a very unpretending publication, but which has in its results effected a mighty change in the character of Sunday Schools, and converted them, from the youngest class to the eldest, into institutions for the direct and systematic study of Bible truth. The publication referred to was a list of Reading Lessons, and subjects designed to guide teachers in their class exercises. It constituted a harmony of the Gospel narratives, with selections from the Acts and the Epistles. The need that existed for such a selection was proved by the fact that 62,000 copies of the first year's list (1841) were sold—a demand that evidently pointed out the duty of the Committee to continue the publication, and render it as acceptable as possible. But this publication was destined to have still greater results. The conductors of "The Teachers' Magazine" published in that work a monthly series of Notes on the subjects thus selected; such Notes not being intended as a substitute for the private study of the teachers, but as a guide which they might find very useful in their own researches. The Committee recommended those Notes to the attention of teachers, and were induced to consider whether they ought not themselves to accompany their list of lessons with a series of Monthly Notes. They very soon came to the conclusion that such a publication would be desirable and useful, but found great difficulties in carrying it out. The expense which must be incurred, and the uncertainty whether a sufficient demand would be found to justify the expenditure, formed one great obstacle; the procuring a suitable individual to undertake the

preparation of such notes was another ; and the necessity of avoiding any statements which might justly give offence to any denomination of evangelical Christians, seemed to present an almost insurmountable barrier to the realization of the desires of the Committee. They, however, resolved to persevere ; they felt the object to be so important that, if necessary, an application of part of the funds of the Society to meet the expense would be justifiable. A Christian minister, in whom the Committee could place the fullest confidence, undertook, and has ever since discharged, the laborious duty of preparing the Notes.

The first number of "The Notes on Scripture Lessons" was that for January, 1841, and throughout the lengthened period during which this publication has now proceeded, the principal parts of both the Old and New Testaments have been brought under consideration, without these Notes having contained anything calculated to offend the doctrinal or ecclesiastical sentiments of any evangelical Christian. They are carefully revised, previously to publication, by a Sub-Committee appointed for that especial purpose, and are issued under an impression that they should not be read by the teachers to the scholars, but that the former should in private make themselves fully acquainted with their contents, and thus be able to communicate to the scholars such portions of the knowledge thus obtained as circumstances may require. The objects sought to be obtained by them has guided the mode in which they are prepared. They are not intended to be materials ready for use, but suggestions to be worked out by teachers themselves for their own use. The Notes are divided into three parts. First, The different words and phrases in the lesson are explained. Secondly, The doctrines contained in it are stated and illustrated occasionally by suitable anecdotes. Thirdly, Practical lessons are drawn from the subject. It has always been the earnest desire of the Committee that the teachers should not consider these Notes as designed to supersede their own diligent study of the Word of God, but rather as an assistance towards making that study more effectual. This object would be more fully attained if to such private meditation

and research were added the advantage of a weekly meeting of teachers, for the purpose of going through the lesson of the ensuing Lord's-day ; in some cases, the minister would be able to meet with the teachers ; in others, the superintendent would preside. The interest and usefulness of such a meeting would be promoted by its being composed of the teachers of several contiguous schools, because a larger attendance would be secured, and the teachers of small schools could thus derive advantages of which they would otherwise, from their limited number, be deprived. To encourage and direct the formation and conduct of such meetings, a Teachers' Preparation Class was opened, and carried on for several years at the Depository, presided over by Mr. Francis Cuthbertson, a member of the Committee, and still forms part of the exercises of the Training Class conducted at the Union ; and many such classes are now established in various parts of the country.

Had the beneficial result of these efforts ended here, they would have afforded abundant cause for gratitude ; but their influence has been much more widely extended. Selections of Scripture Lessons, and Monthly Notes upon them, are now prepared for the teachers of the schools connected with the Church of England. Many schools belonging to the Wesleyan Methodists use Lessons and Notes adapted to their especial use. The Unions of Edinburgh and Glasgow have each adopted a similar plan ; and more recently the "Sunday School Magazine," published by the Paris Sunday School Society, has introduced the system among the schools of France, while in the midst of all this competition the circulation of the Notes published by the Union has gone on steadily increasing. They are prepared in advance for transmission to the colonies, so that teachers in Australia are using weekly the same lessons as their brethren in England ; and instead of this publication being a burden upon the funds of the Union, it has materially assisted them. The circulation now exceeds 32,000 copies monthly. The Lessons for 1867-69 comprise a harmony of the whole Scripture history—the morning being devoted to the Old Testament, and the afternoon to the New. The Notes on these Lessons, when completed

will, it is trusted, constitute an exposition of Scripture truth of permanent importance and value. Thus the desire of the Committee that an uniform Scripture lesson should be taught every Lord's-day, and that teachers should be encouraged and assisted in a diligent and prayerful preparation for their class exercises, has been attained to an extent which they could not have anticipated; and the systematic study of the Scriptures is being diligently prosecuted by thousands of teachers, who seek by prayerful and earnest preparation to make themselves fully acquainted with the lessons they are appointed to teach, thus obtaining for themselves an enlarged acquaintance with Scripture truth, and enabling them to impart to their scholars correct views on the great doctrines of the Gospel. The importance of this cannot be over estimated. The authority of the Scriptures is assailed in various directions—some would deny or qualify its Divine original; others, who admit its authority, would withhold it from the people at large; while a large and increasing body insist upon its being accompanied with an authorized interpretation, lest its meaning should be misunderstood. Fatal results would attend the prevalence of either of these sentiments. The Divine authority of the Scriptures must be upheld, and, as a natural consequence, the principle must be maintained, that it is sinful to withhold it from the sons of men; and that to require submission to any human interpretations of its meaning is an unwarrantable assumption. While the fullest acknowledgment is rendered for all the assistance which wise and holy men in past ages have given to the right understanding of the Divine Word; and while the Christian ministry should ever exert a powerful influence, it must not be forgotten that it is the duty of every one to seek to understand the Scriptures, and that God will give such a measure of His Holy Spirit to those who seek, as will be sufficient to guide them into all truth essential to their salvation. Especially is it the duty of teachers of the young to seek this enlarged acquaintance with the Word of God; thus will their own souls be blessed, and thus will they be made an abundant blessing to those whom they instruct.

Another publication, issued at the same time as the List of Scripture Lessons, deserves especial notice, as designed for the same purpose, that of assisting teachers in preparation for their class exercises. Although issued yearly since that period, it has not yet been appreciated as its merits deserve, but is gradually making its way, and with the improvements introduced into it in successive years, will become an indispensable companion to every thoughtful teacher. The title of this publication is, "The Sunday School Teachers' Pocket Book and Diary," and combines the advantages of an ordinary pocket-book, with features especially adapting it to Sunday School use. The Class Register portion is designed to enable the teacher to keep a complete account of the attendance, conduct, and progress of his scholars, and all other needful matters pertaining to the class, which it is desirable he should have always at hand. The Diary is of yet greater importance, as affording the means of preserving, in a systematic and most convenient form, the various items of information, explanation, or illustration of Bible truth, which every diligent teacher is continually anxious to obtain. Two blank pages are allotted to each Sunday, and here should be inserted such fragments of Biblical Criticism, elucidation of Eastern Customs, illustrations of important doctrines, or striking application of Divine Truth, as come from time to time under the teacher's notice. Every teacher meets with them, but as they seldom bear upon the next Sunday's lesson, they are usually allowed to slip from the memory and be forgotten. The fact that may not suit for one Sunday will often be found suitable for a future one. This the teacher will easily ascertain, by examining the List of Lessons prefixed to the Diary; and if the fact or illustration be found to bear on any of the lessons of the year, it should be at once entered at the corresponding page of the Diary. Thus a large amount of valuable material will be accumulated ready for use, when required, merely by a diligent improvement of those fragments of leisure time which every teacher enjoys, but which are too often permitted to pass by unemployed.

The desire of the Committee that there should be one uniform

Scripture lesson throughout the whole school, received its full realization in the year 1842, when they learnt that one of their number, Mr. W. J. Morrish, a teacher in the Paddington Chapel School, was conducting a large class of young children with much convenience and advantage by the use of an enlarged specimen of a box of movable letters which had been long sold in the toy-shops. They requested a deputation to visit the school, and report the result of the experiment, which was so satisfactory, that it was determined to construct similar boxes for sale. This matter, trifling as it may appear, occupied much time and attention, and involved some expenditure of money, but ultimately the Committee found themselves able to offer to their fellow teachers this assistance in a very satisfactory form. It is now so well known, that any attempt to describe the box itself, or the mode of using it, would be deemed superfluous. It was seen by Mr. Kay, the Secretary to the Committee of the Privy Council on Education (now Sir James Kay Shuttleworth, Bart.), and warmly approved by him, and has since, in a greatly enlarged form, been introduced into the great educational establishments of our land, and through them has found its way largely into public daily schools. Its effects on Sunday Schools have been very great. Infant classes have been very generally introduced into them, by which means children are brought into the schools at an earlier age than was formerly the case; and elder brothers and sisters, who were often kept at home in order to attend to them, can now accompany them to the schools. The instruction is more interesting: a large number can be taught simultaneously by one or two teachers; and in many cases the scholars learn to read in the infant classes with so much fluency, that elementary books and classes become unnecessary, and schools consist of infant, Scripture, and senior classes alone. The Committee rejoiced at the opportunity thus afforded for completing the system of an uniform Scripture-lesson throughout the whole school. A text is selected out of each of the lessons for the day, to be taught to the infant scholars from the letter box, and hints are added to the Notes for the especial use of the teachers of such classes.

In the year 1855, the Committee commenced the publication of a Lesson Book for Elementary Classes, containing two lessons for each Lord's day, composed of verses selected from the Scripture Lessons, sufficient to form a reading exercise, and printed in a bold, legible type, so as to assist the youthful reader. Thus the scholars, from the youngest to the oldest, may be engaged in the study of the same lesson adapted by the teachers to the mental capacities of the scholars, and the closing address being upon the same subject is intelligible to all the scholars who are gathered together to listen to it.

CHAPTER V.

HYMN BOOKS, TUNE BOOKS, AND PERIODICALS PUBLISHED BY THE UNION.

CONTENTS :—First Hymn-book for Teachers, 1816—Ditto for Scholars, 1822—Resolution of the Committee on Tune-books—Hymns for Anniversaries—The Union Tune-book—The Union Harmonist—Juvenile Harmonist—Select Psalmody—Select Music for Young—Musical Hand-bills—Sunday Scholar's Tune-book—Meetings for Practice of Singing—The Sunday Scholar's Hymn-book, with Tunes—The Union Hymn-book for Scholars—Revised, 1841—Infant Scholar's Hymn-book—The Little Hymn-book—The Sunday Scholar's Hymn-book—Singing Classes formed—Tunes and Hymns for Annual Meetings—Union Hymn-book for Teachers—PRIZE ESSAYS—Mr. Charles Reed on "Infant Classes in Sunday Schools"—Mrs. Davids on "The Sunday School"—Mr. J. A. Cooper, and Mr. H. Hall, on Senior Classes—PERIODICAL LITERATURE—Youth's Magazine—Sunday School Repository, and Teachers' Magazine—The Child's Companion—The Union Magazine for Teachers—Bible Class Magazine—Child's Own Magazine—Biblical Treasury—Kind Words—The Sunday School Teacher—Bible Class and Youth's Magazine.

THE three preceding chapters have been occupied with an account of the early publications of the Union, and of their gradual improvement; the names of some of those who took an active part in the proceedings of the Society have been recorded, with the enlargement of its operations consequent on their labours, and a rather extended narrative has been given of the steps which have led to the rendering the Sunday School a place devoted almost exclusively to the systematic study of the Word of God. It would be tedious to detail the various requisites for the conveniently carrying on the operations of the school which are now to be found in the catalogue, although their preparation, and the improvements in them suggested by experience, have required much attention on the part of the Committee, and very much time has been thus employed. But there still remain some publications which

require distinct notice, on account of their important bearing on scholars and teachers. Those to which attention will be first directed relate to the important subject of School Psalmody.

The first step taken by the Committee in this direction, was in the year 1816, when a hymn-book for teachers was published, and which was followed in the year 1822, by the preparation of one for the use of scholars. In the early part of that year the Committee were requested to insert in their catalogue a Sunday School Tune Book, which had been published in the South of London; but the request was declined on the ground that such a work was unnecessary. The Committee by whom that resolution was adopted did not anticipate that their successors would devote so much of their attention to the preparation of a series of musical works, designed in the first instance for the benefit of Sunday Schools, but some of which have been greatly instrumental in the improvement of congregational psalmody, and which now form so considerable a portion of the publications of the Union.

In the year 1825, a small collection of hymns, designed for use at Anniversary Meetings of teachers, was prepared and published; and, in 1828, a new edition of the Sunday School Teachers' Hymn-book was published; and, in 1831, it was again considerably altered and enlarged.

During the year 1836, the Committee at length undertook the preparation of a tune-book. This work had been long previously urged upon them, but declined, and was then undertaken by some private individuals. Still the want experienced did not appear to be met. There were several tune-books in existence, but the inconvenience and expense occasioned by the use of all these works led to an earnest desire for one book, which should include all the tunes which were in common use. The Committee, after much hesitation, felt it their duty to apply themselves to the work. Their specific object, and that which guided them in the selection of tunes, was to enable teachers to conduct with comfort the devotional exercises in their schools. It was, however, soon found that the work was acceptable to congregations generally, and the rapid sale of the first and very

imperfect edition of *THE UNION TUNE BOOK*, encouraged the Committee, at a subsequent period, to prepare and publish a revised and greatly improved and extended work, better adapted for congregational use, and which has since been enlarged by the addition of other tunes, and a selection of chants. The tunes introduced were selected not so much according to the estimate formed by the Committee of their musical character, as by their general acceptance. There is no doubt that many of them were very objectionable on scientific grounds, but it is equally certain that they were very dear to many who had used them long, as the expression of their spiritual joy. The introduction of these made the publication more useful; and its circulation in this country and the British colonies, has been proportionably great. In the year 1853, it was estimated that 40,000 copies had been sold in the five separate editions in which it has been published, and an important aid has thus been rendered to the devotional exercises in congregations and schools. In addition to the *Union Tune Book*, the Committee published in two separate editions *THE UNION HARMONIST*, containing a selection of longer pieces of sacred music; and also, the *JUVENILE HARMONIST*, designed especially for the young. At a subsequent period, 209 of the tunes, and 37 of the chants contained in the *Union Tune Book*, were published in a volume, entitled *SELECT PSALMODY*. A volume of *SELECT MUSIC FOR THE YOUNG*; *MUSICAL HANDBILLS*, being tunes and hymns adapted for anniversaries and domestic and social gatherings; and *THE SUNDAY SCHOLAR'S TUNE BOOK*, both in the old, and Tonic Sol-fa notation, have likewise been issued.

These varied efforts to meet, direct, and sanctify the musical taste, have, it is believed, been productive of great good; and especially when considered in connection with the endeavours made during several years past, to extend the taste for music throughout the land. The Committee discovered that meetings of young persons, many of them Sunday Scholars, assembled, with the professed design of receiving instruction in the art of singing, but, under circumstances calculated to do injury to their moral and religious character. The Committee, therefore,

recommended the forming classes, or associations for singing in Sunday Schools, as a subject of considerable interest and importance to teachers generally; and in various ways sought to render their fellow teachers aid in these attempts. In illustration of this, it may be mentioned that upon an application from the Manchester Union to provide cheap music for the singing classes established among the scholars, the Committee promptly published in penny numbers the Scholars' Hymn Book, with a tune adapted to each hymn.

The attention of the Committee was directed, in the year 1841, to the Union Hymn Book for Scholars, and a Sub-committee was appointed to revise it. The result of that examination was the publication of a hymn book, which, from the extensive alterations and additions made, might be considered a new work; 110 hymns, which appeared unsuitable for children, having been omitted; and 156 new ones inserted, including several composed by Mr. Montgomery and other friends, expressly for this work, and making a total in the work as completed, of 291 hymns. Scripture mottoes, and the names of appropriate tunes were also prefixed to the hymns. It was thought desirable not to confine the selection exclusively to hymns of a devotional character; a few were therefore introduced, intended to be committed to memory, and a few others were retained, rather on account of their frequency of use, than for their intrinsic merit. Of this work 427,000 copies had been sold up to the year 1853. At a subsequent period, many hymns adapted for infant scholars have been added, and it now contains 361 hymns. THE INFANT SCHOLARS' HYMN BOOK, containing 84 hymns; and THE LITTLE HYMN BOOK, selections of hymns for infant scholars, &c., have also been published. At a more recent period, it was thought that a large number of hymns and sacred pieces which had been composed for use in Sunday Schools since the publication of "The Union Hymn Book for Scholars" rendered the preparation of a new work desirable. Nearly 200 hymns in "The Union Hymn Book for Scholars," were retained; and a few of the more popular from the Infant Scholar's Hymn Book. The remainder of the 253 of which the

work consists, were chosen from the best sources, English and American. The work thus compiled, was published under the title of *THE SUNDAY SCHOLARS' HYMN BOOK*.

The Committee observed with great interest the exertions made to cultivate a taste for vocal music, by the formation of classes at Exeter Hall, under the direction of Mr. John Hullah; and gave every facility in their power to the making those exertions known to teachers, many of whom availed themselves of the advantages thus afforded, and the Committee cheerfully voted twenty guineas in aid of the expenses then incurred. They were also induced to print the hymns and music to be sung at the Annual Meeting of the year 1842. The effect produced by this combination of several thousand voices has induced subsequent committees to continue the practice.

While so much attention has been bestowed on the providing the scholars with a suitable hymnology, the teachers have not been neglected. In the year 1844, a new edition of *THE UNION HYMN BOOK FOR TEACHERS* was prepared, and it will afford an illustration of the labour connected with the publications of the Union, to mention that, besides examining various collections of hymns at their own homes, the Sub-Committee appointed for the purpose held 36 meetings, and after perusing more than 10,000 hymns, they selected 181 (including 49 from the former edition) as being the most suitable to constitute *The Union Hymn Book for Teachers*. It was thought desirable that the general form and arrangement of the collection should resemble that of the *Hymn Book for Scholars*, which had given general satisfaction. Texts and the names of tunes were prefixed to the hymns.

While the various publications of the Union have been mostly prepared by the Committee themselves, who as teachers actively engaged in the work were better acquainted with the necessities of their fellow teachers, and with the provision that was most adapted to the circumstances of the scholars, they have frequently availed themselves of the services of others. On some occasions they have sought to gain the benefit of the experience of their fellow teachers by offering prizes for the

best essay on practical subjects connected with the schools. The introduction of the Box of Letters facilitated the establishment of infant classes, and the Committee, feeling their importance, offered prizes for the best essays on the mode of conducting them. That which appeared to the adjudicators to be the best, was written by Mr. Charles Reed, and has been published under the title of "The Infant Class in the Sunday School." In the year 1847, the Committee received an application from the Manchester Union, urging the desirableness of providing a book of instruction for teachers. They thought the best mode of securing the object aimed at, was to offer the sum of £100 for the best book of practical instructions for Sunday School Teachers. The work was intended to comprehend a careful review of the qualifications,—mental, moral, and religious,—which should be found in the teacher, and of his duties to himself, his class, and society; descriptions of the best mode of conducting infant, elementary, Scripture and senior classes; with the peculiar qualifications requisite in the teachers of each; general government of the school; directions for conducting the various meetings of teachers; an examination of the religious services connected with the schools; instructions for establishment of schools; and a concise view of their important relations to the scholars, the teachers, the church, and society in general. These various subjects were to be accompanied with numerous illustrations, taken, as far as practical, from actual observation and experience. When the various essays, sent in by the competitors, had been read by the adjudicators, they had not any hesitation in awarding the prize to one, which proved to have been written by Mrs. Davids, the wife of the Rev. T. W. Davids, of Colchester. The Essay was published under the title of "The Sunday School," and it is not too much to say, that while exceptions will be taken to some statements in it, yet no other work will be found to present an equally ample development of the Sunday school, in all its various relations; and that no library of such an institution can be complete without possessing a copy. Two subsequent editions of the essay have been required; and while it has been thought desirable to retain

the text in its integrity, opportunity has been taken of these republications, to add some notes, by which it is hoped its usefulness may be increased. In the year 1849, two prizes of £10 and £5, having been offered for Essays on Senior Classes, the first prize was awarded to Mr. J. A. Cooper, Secretary to the Birmingham Union, and the second to Mr. Henry Hall, now the Trade Manager of the Sunday School Union. Mr. Cooper's Essay now forms one of the standard publications of the Union.

This narrative of the publications of the Union would be very deficient, if distinct notice was not taken of one class of them, which has gradually assumed a great degree of importance. It will have been perceived that one of the first undertakings of the Union was to prepare some of the simplest materials for the instruction of the scholars. At that period, periodical publications, either for the instruction of teachers, or the entertainment of scholars, were alike unknown; and few of those who now weekly and monthly enjoy this advantage, are sensible of the source from whence it sprang. In bringing to a close, therefore, this detail of the manner in which the Union has sought, by its publications, to serve the interests of both teachers and scholars, it is necessary to give some account of the periodicals which have issued from it, and which have for many years exercised so great an influence.

The first periodical which will be mentioned was designed for the young, and was entitled *THE YOUTH'S MAGAZINE*. It originated in the Committee of the Union, shortly after its establishment; but they did not feel it prudent to undertake the responsibility, as they had no funds to meet the loss in case it should not succeed. It was therefore undertaken by Mr. Gurney and some members of the Committee. And the first number commenced with the year 1805. Mr. Gurney took the principal part in conducting it. The price charged for it was high, but there being no other publication of a similar description, it speedily attained a large circulation, as many as 60 copies being purchased monthly by the scholars in one school.* Miss Jane Taylor, Mrs. Sherwood, and other talented writers of the young, became regular

* *Sunday School Repository*, 1831, p. 131.

writers in the magazine. The report of the Union for 1812, stated that the publication had met with distinguished patronage, and had continued to acquire an increasing circulation; out of the profits arising from its sale its conductors had been enabled to make the following grants,—to the British and Foreign Bible Society, £50; to the Religious Tract Society, £50; to the Hibernian School Society, £50. And for many years, it yielded considerable profits to its conductors amounting in the whole, to £4000. They devoted the whole of those profits to objects connected with the diffusion of Scriptural truth; and in these donations the Union largely shared.

On the first of January, 1813, appeared the first number of a quarterly publication, afterwards converted into a monthly one entitled, *THE SUNDAY SCHOOL REPOSITORY, OR TEACHERS' MAGAZINE*, a work which was originated and carried on, for many years, by Mr. Lloyd, the Secretary to the Union, with much arduous labour. He submitted a prospectus of the proposed publications, to the Committee of the Union, in the previous April, under the title of "*The Sunday School Teachers' Magazine.*" That prospectus was examined by Mr. Stephen Warner, and Mr. Edward Thomas, members of the Committee, in conjunction with Mr. Lloyd; and 500 copies of it were ordered to be printed and circulated at the first public meeting of the Union. This appears to have been the only official notice the Committee took of the work at that time, but they afterwards aided the conductors of it by making some donations towards the expense of carrying it on. Some other members of the Committee joined Mr. Lloyd in the conducting the work, which afterwards took the title which had been originally proposed. It obtained a large circulation, and part of the profits were applied in grants to the Union. While other periodicals on the subject of education, appeared and disappeared in rapid succession, it held on its way, conferring great good on the Sunday School cause; but gradually other periodicals of a similar description arose, materially affecting its circulation.

The attention of the Committee was occupied in the year 1820, by a proposal submitted to them for publishing a penny Magazine for children. They determined in favour of the undertaking, but

do not appear to have been sufficiently prompt. Mr. W. Gover, then a teacher in the south of London ; and who has since been for many years an active and useful member of the Union,* commenced and carried on, for two years, such a magazine, on his own responsibility; and the Religious Tract Society in 1824 followed the example thus set, by the publication of "The Child's Companion." As it was always the aim of the Union, rather to undertake the publication of works which other parties declined, but the necessity for which appeared evident, than to enter into competition with them, they gladly withdrew, and left the field open for those who were able and willing to occupy it. But the facts are recorded, that it may be known where those periodicals, which now exert so beneficial influence on our youthful population, had their origin.

In the year 1843, the Committee were urged to publish a cheap magazine for teachers. The high price (6d.) charged for "The Teachers' Magazine," necessarily limited its circulation, which was practically confined to the taking one or two numbers for the whole of the teachers in a school ; and it was thought that great benefit would result, if the Committee could keep up a constant communication with the teachers. One difficulty which presented itself, was the fear that such a proceeding might injure "The Teachers' Magazine," in whose welfare the Committee felt deeply interested. After frequent deliberations, the Committee came to the conclusion that it would be possible to establish a new work without seriously, if at all, injuring the existing one, and with this conviction, THE UNION MAGAZINE FOR SUNDAY SCHOOL TEACHERS was commenced on 1st January, 1844. The price was fixed at two pence monthly, to enable every teacher to possess a copy. Every endeavour was made to render the work useful to teachers, which necessarily prevented it from being interesting to general readers, but enhanced its value in the estimation of thoughtful pains-taking labourers in the Sunday School work.

With the year 1848, commenced the publication of the THE BIBLE CLASS MAGAZINE, a penny religious miscellany, designed

* Mr. Gover entered into his rest on November 24, 1868, he having survived his intimate friend, Mr. Watson only one month.

especially for senior scholars and junior teachers, with the rising youth in Christian congregations generally. The Committee were induced to undertake this work from a conviction of the importance of providing a periodical adapted to these classes. While every religious community, and almost every class of every community, had its appropriate monthly magazine for them, no adequate periodical had been established. A few excellent works which might appear suitable had been sent forth; but the price of most, the denominational features of many, and the absence from all of the exact character required, still left the large body of senior scholars and junior teachers, as a class, without a magazine. The Committee determined that the periodical should not fall below any of its competitors in its size or general arrangements.

At the Conference held on the morning of the Anniversary, in 1852, a suggestion was made, and appeared to receive general support, that a cheap periodical was needed for the youngest scholars. The Committee, immediately after their appointment, took this matter into consideration, and thought that such a work might be useful. They, therefore, determined to commence it at once, and the first number of *THE CHILD'S OWN MAGAZINE*, price one half-penny, appeared in July. The anticipations formed as to the necessity for such a periodical have been fully realised. It has been welcomed with general acceptance, and has secured a very large circulation amongst the little folks, for whose especial use it is designed.

The Committee announced in the year 1861, a monthly periodical, entitled *THE BIBLICAL TREASURY*, price one penny, devoted exclusively to Biblical Illustration and Criticism, gathered from Oriental Customs, Natural History, and Philosophy, Topography, Historic Events, Missionary Incidents, Idolatrous Usages, and the facts of every day life. The eight volumes already published form an Encyclopædia of ready reference to nearly two thousand texts of Scripture. The illustrations are made readily accessible by an Index of subjects and texts added to each volume; and a complete index to the first six volumes has been published separately.

At a more recent period an attempt has been made to bring an interesting and useful periodical within the reach of that very numerous class of the young, who are unhappily indisposed for religious instruction, and who gratify their tastes for reading by the purchase of weekly publications, which are more calculated to injure than improve their minds. In order to interest while seeking to instruct them, *KIND WORDS FOR BOYS AND GIRLS*, was commenced with the year 1866. It does not profess to be a religious publication, although conducted on Christian principles, but its contents are intended to attract the attention of those who will have something to read calculated to excite their imaginations. It is well supplied with pictorial illustrations, is published weekly, at the price of one half-penny, and great pains have been taken to secure its sale in the crowded population of London, as well as throughout the country. The labour and expense involved in this attempt to benefit the lower class of the youthful population of the land, have been considerable, but have been cheerfully yielded, under a conviction of the importance of the object sought to be obtained.

The Sunday School Teachers' Magazine, and the Youths' Magazine, had for some few years become the property of the Union, and had been conducted by members of the Committee. During the year 1867, both the Editors* were compelled to resign their offices, and thus forced on the serious consideration of a question which had before occupied attention, whether there was the prospect of an adequate benefit being realised from the publication of two periodicals, so much resembling others issued by the Union at a much lower price, as to justify the Committee in undertaking to procure new editors. It was painful to contemplate their extinction, after an honourable and useful existence of considerably more than fifty years. The result of much consideration was, that it was resolved to discontinue both the *Teachers' Magazine*, and the *Union Magazine for Sunday School Teachers*; and that instead of them, *THE SUNDAY SCHOOL TEACHER*, combining the distinctive merits of

* Mr Watson was the Editor of the "Sunday School Teachers' Magazine," and his failing health caused his resignation.

both its predecessors, should be commenced at the low price of two pence monthly. The propriety of the course adopted appears from the fact, that the circulation of the new periodical already amounts to double that of both its predecessors. A somewhat similar course was adopted with respect to the *Youth's Magazine*, which was amalgamated with the *Bible Class Magazine*, under the title of THE BIBLE CLASS AND YOUTH'S MAGAZINE, and from the increase in the circulation, it is believed, that the larger number of the readers of the Youth's Magazine have become subscribers to its successor.

It would be tedious to notice in detail all the other various publication of the Union. Some of the principal and most influential of them have been recorded in this and the three preceding chapters, and when it is remembered, that during the first nine years of the Union's existence, its publications only amounted to six in number, of which, during that period, about 273,000 copies had been sold, while at the present time, independently of all its other publications, the Union is publishing three periodicals for scholars, and three for teachers, the united monthly circulation of which amounts to about 250,000, or an annual circulation of three million copies, it is impossible to refrain from saying, "What hath God wrought?" and from praying that so mighty an instrument for good may be energetically and usefully employed. Four of these periodicals are edited gratuitously by members of the Committee, while the two others, for which it has seemed desirable to obtain aid outside the Committee, are subject to their careful revision.

CHAPTER VI.

EFFORTS OF THE UNION TO STIMULATE AND ENCOURAGE SUNDAY SCHOOL TEACHERS IN THEIR WORK.

CONTENTS:—The Union Prompting Similar Publications to its own—FIRST AND SECOND OBJECTS OF UNION—Quarterly Meetings—Increase in Number of Schools—First Annual Public Breakfast, 1812—Legh Richmond on Christian Union—Attendance at the Breakfast—Committee's want of Gallantry—Sunday School Missionary, Mr. J. R. Wilson—Deputations to Provinces—JUBILEE OF SUNDAY SCHOOLS—Mr. James Montgomery—Plans for Celebration—Publications connected with—Evangelical Magazine for August, 1831—Meetings Connected with Jubilee—Results—Alteration of Time and Character of Annual Meeting—Mr. Wilson's Efforts.

HAD the Union done nothing more for Sunday Schools than to provide the literature, of some of which an account has been given in the four preceding chapters, it would not have existed in vain. But it has done much more. There are many who so far disapprove of the catholic principles on which the publications of the Union have always been prepared, as to prefer that the works put into the hands of the young should be imbued with their own peculiar doctrinal and ecclesiastical sentiments. By them, accordingly, the publications of which an account has been given, and others that have not been mentioned, have been taken as models on which they have constructed a literature which they think more desirable to place in the hands of the teachers and scholars of the schools conducted by them. The indirect results of the labours of the Union would vastly increase the aggregate amount of good it has been permitted to accomplish.

But it now becomes necessary to return to the early days of the Union, and to trace the manner in which it has sought to

carry out the first and second objects of its formation, namely, the stimulating and encouraging each other in the religious instruction of the young, and by mutual communication improving the methods of instruction. These objects were sought to be carried out by holding quarterly meetings, open to all Sunday School teachers, when the reports of the schools connected with the Union, and the proceedings of the Committee were read; interesting instances of usefulness, improved plans of instruction, and any information calculated to promote the objects of the Union were mentioned, and occasionally questions previously appointed relative to Sunday Schools were considered and discussed. The meeting in July was also considered the Annual Meeting of the Union, at which the Committee and Officers were elected. These proceedings were very much of a private character. The meetings were not calculated to excite public attention. Great good had, however, attended them. They were held in various parts of London :— at Surrey Chapel, City Road Chapel, Sion Chapel, and Chapel Street, Soho, and occasionally at other places. The report read, and the discussions conducted at these meetings, excited attention, encouraged and instructed teachers, and led to the establishment of many new schools, as well as to the improvement of existing ones. Previously to the formation of the Union one school in a district for several congregations was thought sufficient; but subsequently the feeling was diffused that each congregation should have a school for itself, thus creating a demand for teachers which the proceedings of the Union greatly assisted in meeting.

The Union having quietly pursued its course for a period of nine years, it was in the year 1812, thought by the Committee, that the time had arrived for making its proceedings more public. Accordingly, it was determined to invite the teachers and friends of Sunday Schools to a public breakfast, on the morning of Wednesday, May 13th, at the New London Tavern, Cheapside. Breakfast was provided at seven o'clock for two hundred, and the meeting excited great interest. Mr. Marriott, the treasurer, presided; and after the Rev. Richard Watson

had implored the Divine blessing, a report of the proceedings of the Union from its formation was read.

The first resolution submitted to the meeting was moved by Mr. T. H. Horne, author of "The Introduction to the Critical Study of the Scriptures," who afterwards became the Rector of St. Edmund's the King, and Prebendary of St. Paul's; and seconded by the Rev. Legh Richmond, the author of "The Dairyman's Daughter." There were some sentiments in the address of this devoted minister of Christ which deserve to be recorded, as showing the principles upon which the Union was founded, and upon which its successive Committees had endeavoured to carry on its operations. He said:—"I confess it to be no small inducement to me, in delivering my sentiments on this occasion, that I see the word 'Union' in the title of the Society. Union, in all those points wherein we can conscientiously and consistently agree, appears to be the great secret, now at length happily discovered, for bringing into effect, and into prosperous co-operation, the hearts, the hands, and all the combined energies of the men of God. I feel particularly thankful that a plan has been discovered by which ministers and other Christians may labour together with so much affectionate exertions, and that, frequently, with prospects of the greatest success, in the first of national objects, the introduction of our British youth to the knowledge of the religion of Christ. My dear brethren, *unite earnestly in the work*. May the Sunday School Union prove a union of affection, and a union of opinions, as far as you can possibly unite (and God forbid that we should endeavour to find out how much we can possibly differ). May there be a union of those general principles which shall make the Church of God strong and united in the exertions of its most enlightened and zealous members. It is my firm belief—or I would never wish to address a meeting, consisting as this does, of persons of different denominations—that the happiest event of the century which has now commenced is the growing disposition among Christians of various names and denominations to unite in great and glorious undertakings. I have heard the arguments

of the prejudiced on this question, I have read the observations of the worldly wise upon it; but the more I have heard and read them, the more I have seen that the foolishness, as it may be called, of Christian charity is confounding the policy of the wise men of this world. There must be some circumstances take place, as forerunners of the latter-day glory; there must be something come to pass, by which the divisions, heart-burnings, and jealousies, which have too long prevailed among us, may be brought to a close. A miracle to effect this we have no reason to expect; it must advance gradually: nor do I think there is anything fanciful in believing that that work is now accomplishing; not by the nominal, but by the real union of hearts, engaged in so many grand and beneficial undertakings. I have happily experienced some of the most delightful moments of life in the enjoyment of that brotherly communication with fellow Christians of other denominations, which though at a former period of life I thought highly desirable, yet I confess I did not expect to see so speedily brought into frequent and cordial existence. I can speak for myself, and I am sure I can speak in the name of many of my brethren in the Church of England, in testimony of the pleasure which we have derived, from finding that those who had been accustomed to think themselves at a great distance from each other, are at length, through the influence of a sort of spiritual central attraction, if I may call it so, brought to love one another, and almost to wonder that they feel so affectionately and so nearly allied. We compromise no principles of conscientious attachment to our own views of Church doctrine or discipline ourselves; neither do we expect this from others. But there is something in union, for Christian and benevolent purposes, which acts like a talisman on the heart, and elicits its best and noblest affections, that they may be consecrated at the foot of the cross of Christ. By this means a thousand half explained, or ill-explained sources of difference and disputation among us gradually lose their former importance, and we are mutually become willing to consign them to oblivion."

The second resolution was moved by Mr. Thomas James, who had been Secretary of an Union formed in Hampshire, and who afterwards entered into the ministry, and having become the Secretary of the Colonial Missionary Society, still survives at a very advanced age; and was seconded by the Rev. G. Thom. The remaining speakers were Mr. Benjamin Neale, the Superintendent of Surrey Chapel School; the Rev. Mr. Frey, Mr. Gurney, and the Rev. Alexander Fletcher.

It will thus be seen, that this first public meeting of the Union exhibited a delightful exemplification of Christian love, and it has been the desire of the various Committees, that each succeeding meeting should preserve the same character. It is to be feared, however, that the anticipations indulged in by Mr. Richmond, and arising from the warm affections of his heart, were too sanguine, and that Christian union has not made the progress he desired or expected. The difficulty of conducting a united Society has been found recently to increase, in consequence of the eagerness with which all religious parties seek the promotion of their peculiar views. In the conflict thus created, Christian union is necessarily endangered: but should not every effort be made "to keep the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace?"

The Annual Breakfast was removed in 1815, to the City of London Tavern, in Bishopsgate Street, now the Wesleyan Methodist Centenary Hall, where it continued to be held until the year 1832. The attendance largely increased, until at length it exceeded 1,200. The hour for breakfast was altered to six; but the anxiety to be present rendered it necessary to anticipate the hour, and between four and five in the morning, east, west, north and south, groups of young light-hearted youths and maidens were seen bending their way to Bishopsgate street, to the wonderment of the frequenters of the London Markets, who could not imagine why such an unwonted addition was so suddenly made to the early London population. Before five o'clock, so great a crowd had assembled round the doors of the Tavern, that it became necessary to throw them open for the admission of the people; and by the time stated for the com-

mencement of breakfast, that meal had been disposed of. The large room was crammed with an audience not over patient, and as soon as the chairman had arrived, and had taken some refreshment, the proceedings commenced. No doubt the recollection of the few survivors of those who used to attend, will vary according to the impression made upon their minds, but few will forget the opening psalm—

“From all that dwell below the skies,”

invariably sung to the same tune, Denbigh, and which seemed never so well sung anywhere else; nor the bluff form of Joseph Butterworth, Esq., M.P. for Coventry, first the treasurer, and afterwards the president of the Union; nor the amiable countenance and persuasive oratory of the author of “The Dairyman’s Daughter;” nor John Bunyan’s successor, Mr. Hillyard, of Bedford, who invariably attended, and as certainly brought with him his great predecessor, to add to the interest of the meeting. Nor can the Rev. James Upton, of Church Street, Blackfriars, be forgotten, whose early rising habits rendered his attendance at such a meeting no difficulty. There are some who will remember the notice given by the Committee (in imitation of the plan adopted by the British and Foreign Bible Society), that in consequence of the large attendance, ladies could not be admitted; they will still be able to realise the good-natured face of Mr. Upton, when, in his address, he adverted to this prohibition, saying, “At an early hour this morning, my granddaughters came to my door, and said, ‘Grandfather, are you not getting up to go with us to the Union?’ ‘But they will not let you in, my dears.’ ‘Well, we will try; we will go and see if they will shut us out.’ The results might be easily foretold; the ladies triumphed. The Committee got laughed at for their want of gallantry, and no attempt was afterwards made to enforce the rule.”

It was at one of these annual gatherings, that the Rev. Legh Richmond first told the story of “The Collier Boy and his candle box,” which has since been very extensively circulated

as a tract. On May 3, 1815, an accident occurred at the Heaton Main Colliery, near Newcastle-on-Tyne. The water broke in upon the working, endangering the lives of the whole of the workers. Some escaped, but though great exertions were made, nine months passed before the bodies of the others could be reached. Among those who perished were John Thew and his sons William and Thomas.

After the bodies were put in coffins, the relatives were permitted to go down the pit for the purpose of recognising their husbands or children; and Elizabeth Thew was among the foremost. She readily found out her son William's body by his fine auburn hair. What must have been her feelings, when in one of his pockets was found his tin candle-box, on which, in the darkness of the suffocating pit, or with only the dim light of his Davy lamp, the dear boy had, with a nail, engraved the following touching words :

"Fret not, dear mother, for we were singing while we had time, and praising God. Mother, follow God more than ever I did."

And then on the other side were found the following words, which, it is supposed, must have been dictated by his father, as it bears his signature, though he could not write :

"If Johnny is saved, be a good lad to God and thy mother."

"JOHN THEW."

William Thew, the writer of these touching lines, was the second son of John and Elizabeth Thew, and was seventeen years of age at the time of the catastrophe. A younger brother, John, was one of those who, on the alarm of the bursting in of the water being made, escaped with others by the shaft. William and John were scholars in the Byker Sunday-school at the time, and were steady and well-disposed boys. William met in class among the Wesleyan Methodists at the time, and attended an evening school, where he learned to write and cipher. His mother relates, that her sons were very affectionate and steady; that after returning from their work, and when

cleaned and refreshed by their meals, they were in the habit of reading the Bible to her, and never retired to rest without prayer. Many pleasing anecdotes are related by their mother, particularly of William, who seems to have been her favourite son. On one occasion he said to her, "Mother, when I'm a man, I'll work hard for you, and keep you like a lady."

The Reverend speaker exhibited to the meeting the candle-box upon which the letter was written, and which was afterwards used in a similar manner at many other places, the story related, and collections made for the mother. Thus the candle-box became a source of income for the widow in her time of trouble.

The direct efforts of the Union to extend and improve the Sunday School system throughout the Metropolis, were generally undertaken by the Auxiliary Unions, while the publications issued from time to time were exercising an indirect influence in the same direction upon the country schools. The Committee had, for a long period, been sensible of the importance and necessity of increasing Sunday Schools throughout the country, and of rendering those already established more efficient, especially as related to religious instruction. While much had been done, much still remained to be accomplished; and the establishment of efficient Sunday School Unions seemed the best means of attaining the desired objects. Mere correspondence, or an occasional transient visit by a member of the Committee, it was thought, could not produce the needed impulse. In America, the example had been set of employing Sunday School Missionaries, who had there been extensively useful. The Committee had long been convinced that it was desirable to adopt such a plan in this country, but had been deterred from attempting it by the smallness of their funds. This difficulty was now removed by the liberal offers of some friends in the North of England; and the Committee, in the year 1827, engaged Mr. Joseph Reid Wilson, formerly Secretary of the Newcastle Union, to devote his whole time and energies to the arduous work of a Sunday School Missionary. Mr. Wilson's acquaintance with the Sunday School system, and his zealous,

persevering, and successful exertions, in extending and improving it in Newcastle and its neighbourhood, pointed him out as admirably adapted for this employment. By his means the beneficial influence of Mr. Gall's labours, of which an account has been given in a previous chapter, was greatly extended. He explained the plan in the various places he visited, and thus the knowledge of it was extensively diffused. In the course of the year, a deputation from the Committee visited the Unions in the counties of Kent and Sussex, with a view of carrying out in these districts the objects which the Missionary was promoting in the North of England. In the year 1829, a similar deputation attended meetings of the Unions, in the counties of Essex, Suffolk, and Cambridge, and in 1830, parts of Berkshire, Somerset, Herefordshire, and Gloucestershire, were gone through. The deputation attended meetings of the existing Unions, and also succeeded in establishing new Unions, at Reading, Hereford, Ross, and Gloucester. At the request of the Committee, Mr. Althans visited the schools at Christchurch, Hampshire, superintended by the Rev. Daniel Gunn. A detailed account of this visitation was published, and excited much, and very general interest.

These various measures had done much towards promoting the extension and improvement of Sunday Schools, by mutual intercourse amongst the teachers; but a still greater impulse was given to this object by the celebration of the Jubilee in the year 1831. The idea had been suggested by Mr. James Montgomery, the Christian poet, and the warm friend of Sunday Schools. In a letter to Mr. Lloyd, dated December 11, 1829, Mr. Montgomery remarked, "It has occurred to me, that a Sunday School Jubilee in the year 1831, fifty years from the origin of Sunday Schools, might be the means of extraordinary and happy excitement to the public mind in favour of these Institutions, of which there was never more need than at this time, when daily instruction is within the reach of almost every family; for the more universal the education of the children of the poor becomes, the greater necessity there is that they should have religious knowledge imparted to them; which can be done,

perhaps on no day so well as the Lord's." This communication excited much anxious deliberation. The result was, that in the Report presented to the Annual Meeting of this year, the Committee stated the plan which they recommended for the celebration of the fiftieth anniversary of the establishment of Sunday Schools. They proposed that the sum of £10,000 should be raised : 1st, to encourage the erection of additional permanent buildings adapted for Sunday Schools, which might also be suitable for infant or day schools; 2ndly, for the promotion of Sunday School Missions. The following plans for raising this Jubilee offering were suggested : 1st, a collection in all places of public worship on Sunday, September 11th, 1831 ; 2ndly, donations of one shilling and upwards from the friends and teachers of Sunday Schools, and one penny from Sunday School children, for which collecting cards would be provided by the Union. The plan proposed for celebrating the Jubilee was as follows :—

1. That the Sunday School Jubilee be held on Wednesday, the 14th day of September, 1831—the anniversary of Mr. Raikes' birthday.

2. That a prayer meeting of Sunday School teachers, either united or in each separate school, as may be thought most advisable, be held from seven to eight o'clock in the morning.

3. That the children in the schools connected with the Auxiliary and Country Unions be assembled for public worship ; the service to commence at half-past ten, and close at twelve.

4. That at six o'clock a public meeting be held in Exeter Hall, for the teachers of London and its vicinity, and that public meetings be held at the same time in each of the Country Unions.

5. That a collection be made at the public meetings to complete the Jubilee Offering.

6. That as Sunday School Unions do not at present exist in some parts of this country, it is recommended that in such places Sunday School teachers should unite for the purpose of celebrating the Jubilee according to the above plan, and transmit their contributions to the Sunday School Union.

Mr. Montgomery kindly wrote two hymns for teachers, and

one for scholars, and Mr. Gilbert another for scholars, to be used at the above meeting, which, with a portrait of Mr. Raikes, were engraved on steel. Medals were also struck, in commemoration of the occasion, and at the request of the Committee, Mrs. Copley prepared a sketch of the History of Sunday Schools, adapted for the perusal of children. The sale of these publications was so extensive, that the profits arising from them wholly defrayed the large expenses which the Committee incurred in the celebrations.

This extensive demand arose from the great interest which the proposed festival excited, and afforded reason to hope that a large portion, if not the whole of the £10,000, would be raised as a Jubilee offering. But in the Evangelical Magazine for August there appeared a letter, signed "Monitor," written by a highly-esteemed minister, since deceased; it was also specially commended to attention by the Editor. The object of the letter was to excite suspicion as to the design of the Committee in soliciting the Jubilee Offering, as to the mode in which it was to be expended, and as to the manner of celebrating the Jubilee. As the writer of this article, and the editor of the work in which it appeared, subsequently acknowledged that their suspicions were unfounded, it is not necessary to go into details on this painful subject. So far as the Jubilee Offering was concerned, the attack was so well-timed that it could not fail of its effect. The efforts which were making throughout the country were paralysed, and although a full and complete vindication of the Committee appeared as early as possible, yet there was no time to restore the confidence which had been destroyed. Thus, instead of £10,000, only £2,257 19s. 8d. was contributed; of which £1,180 6s. 9d. was received through the London Auxiliaries.

In other respects, however, the interest which had been excited was not destroyed. The arrangements made by the Committee were carried out, not only in London, but in most parts of the country, and a season of holy excitement and pleasure was experienced, which still dwells in the memory of those who were privileged to partake of it. The largest

assemblage of scholars in London was at Exeter Hall, where 4,043 were gathered together. It was found impossible to admit the whole into the large Hall, where the Rev. John Morrison, D.D., delivered the address from Jer. iii. 4 :—"Wilt thou not from this time cry unto me, My Father, thou art the guide of my youth?" Those who were thus excluded were addressed in the Lower Hall by the Rev. Joseph Ivimey. Very many similar meetings were held in various parts of London and its vicinity, and probably 50,000 scholars thus joined in celebrating the Jubilee. In the afternoon, however, the interest, which in the earlier parts of the day had been distributed in different portions amongst the respective prayer-meetings of teachers and assemblies of scholars, became concentrated upon one object—the great Jubilee Meeting of Sunday School Teachers at Exeter Hall. The chair was taken by the Right Hon. Lord Henley. After singing the Jubilee Hymn, "Let songs of praise arise, &c.," the Rev. R. H. Shepherd offered prayer, and Mr. Lloyd read an address from the Committee, stating the circumstances under which the meeting had been convened. The respective resolutions were moved and seconded by the Revds. John Blackburn, F. A. Cox, D.D., John Burnett, John Morrison, D.D., Samuel Drew, and John Ivatt Briscoe, Esq., M.P. The Rev. J. C. Brigham, of New York, furnished to the meeting some details relative to the progress of Sunday Schools in America. In acknowledging the vote of thanks to the chairman, his Lordship, who presented a cheque of twenty guineas as his contribution to the Jubilee Offering, said, "You will easily, I am sure, believe me, my Christian friends, when I inform you that I never yet felt so great a degree of embarrassment in receiving the approbation of my fellow-Christians as on the present occasion. This meeting—exceeding in point of numbers any that I have seen—exceeding, as I am sure it does, in knowledge, and intelligence, and in Christian spirit, every meeting that I have ever before beheld collected within the walls of an assembly—to receive the thanks and approbation of such a meeting is a proud moment in the life of one who never sought for public applause

nor public favour. It is a moment that cannot be appreciated. Ladies and gentlemen, till to-day, though I was aware of their excellence, though I was aware of much of the good that has been done by Sunday Schools, I was to a degree ignorant of the vast amount of good derived from their hands. In the words of one of our poets, I would say—

‘Greatly instructed, I shall hence depart,
Greatly improved in mind, in thought, and heart.’

May you proceed from grace to grace. May this work of faith and love extend not only throughout this country, but to the most distant shores. May it extend to nations yet unborn, and be the means of raising millions to happiness in this world, and to a crown of glory in the world to come.”

The vast assembly then rose and sang the Jubilee Hymn, “Love is the theme of saints above,” &c. The effect of this concluding exercise was most overwhelming, and will never be forgotten by those who had the happiness to be present.

In order that those who had been unable to obtain admission might not be wholly disappointed, the lower Hall was opened, and quickly filled. Here the Rev. Samuel Hillyard, of Bedford, presided; and addresses were delivered by Mr. Gurney, Rev. Robert Vaughan, Thomas Farmer, Esq., Rev. Joseph Belcher, Rev. Arthur Tidman, Rev. Thomas Binney, and Rev. George Evans. The last speaker communicated the intelligence which had arrived that afternoon, of the simultaneous celebration of the Jubilee in America. Notwithstanding this additional meeting there were still many who were unable to share in the intellectual feast thus provided, and for their accommodation the Rev. J. MacNaughton, the minister of the Scotch Church in Crown Court, kindly lent the use of that place, where a third meeting was held. James Wyld, Esq., presided; and the Rev. Joseph Ivimey, Rev. W. D. Day, Rev. W. Davis, Missionary to Graham’s Town, South Africa; Rev. J. MacNaughton, Thomas Thompson, Esq., and Lieutenant Arnold, addressed the assembly.

The anticipations indulged in by Mr. Montgomery as to the

results of the Sunday School Jubilee were realised to a considerable extent. Teachers were led to think more highly of their work, while the Church was induced to form a more correct estimate of the importance of these Institutions. But such a festival could not have been celebrated, had not the Sunday School Union existed to arrange and guide it. Thus another proof was afforded of the value of such an association.

The success which had thus attended the celebration of the Jubilee had excited a feeling in the Committee that the time had come when the pleasant morning meetings of the Union must give way to others where a more convenient time and a more spacious building would permit the assemblage of a larger number of their fellow-teachers, for which the erection of Exeter Hall had afforded facilities. The falling off in the attendance at these morning meetings also betokened that the time had arrived for making a change. Lord Henley presided at the first of these meetings, held in Exeter Hall in 1832, and also at the succeeding one ; soon after which he was visited with affliction, which in no very lengthened period closed his earthly career, to the deep sorrow of those who had beheld his entire devotedness to the service of the Saviour. On being applied to on one occasion to undertake some service for the Union, he observed that he had been that morning engaged in visiting for the District Visiting Society, and was then going to attend the levée of his Sovereign, intimating that the former occupation afforded him the most pleasure, although he felt that from the station he occupied it was his duty not to neglect the latter.

On removing the Annual Meeting to Exeter Hall, such means were adopted as were considered suitable to secure an increased attendance proportioned to the much enlarged accommodation, but for the first two years without success. On the third year, therefore, it was determined to issue tickets of admission to the Hall. This largely augmented the number of those desirous of obtaining admission. In the fourth year, 1835, so large was the attendance, that it became necessary to open the lower room for the benefit of those who, although holding tickets,

could not make their way into the Upper Hall. The inconveniences attending a double meeting, however, disinclined the Committee from again undertaking it, and some improvements in the Hall, from time to time, have enabled a larger number to share in these festivals, but still very many who would gladly be present are necessarily excluded.

The labours of Mr. Wilson, as travelling agent of the Union, were suspended in the year 1837, in consequence of the death of his father, which compelled him to devote himself for a season to the duties thereupon devolving upon him. Those duties proved more onerous than had been anticipated; and ultimately a variety of circumstances concurred to induce Mr. Wilson to resign his office. His labours had tended very much to promote the interests of the Union. He had made known its objects; had brought its publications before the friends of Sunday Schools; and the result was, the relinquishment of much prejudice with which the Union had previously had to contend. But his exertions had been still more useful to the teachers throughout the country. His addresses awakened their zeal, and directed them to the adoption of plans for the improvement of their schools, from which the scholars long continued to derive benefit, whilst his earnest appeals to the children assembled on various occasions, and his short prayer urged upon them, "Lord, convert my soul, for Christ's sake, Amen," were, in many instances, blessed to the conversion of their souls.

CHAPTER VII.

EFFORTS OF THE UNION TO STIMULATE AND ENCOURAGE SUNDAY SCHOOL TEACHERS IN THEIR WORK.—*Continued.*

CONTENTS :—Mr. Lloyd's Resignation of Secretaryship—Official Changes—Plans for Deputations—Instances of Usefulness connected with them—Halifax Sunday School Festival, 1846—Conferences of Sunday School Teachers, &c.—The Visit of the Queen to Manchester—Gathering of Sunday Scholars in Peel Park—Mr. Needham—The Census of 1851, and Sunday Schools—Birmingham Sunday School Canvass—London Sunday School Canvass—Results.

In the year 1843, the Committee were reluctantly compelled to accept the resignation of Mr. Lloyd, to whom the Union had been so greatly indebted in its earlier years. In consequence of his severe indisposition the preparation of the report presented to the Annual Meeting in 1837, was necessarily intrusted to other hands;* it being, however, hoped that he would be speedily restored to health, and to his extensive sphere of usefulness in the Church. These hopes, however, were disappointed, and Mr. Lloyd felt it his duty to tender his resignation of the office which he had held for so many years, with honour to himself, and with usefulness to the Society. The Committee, on receiving this communication, passed resolutions expressive of their deep sense of the services rendered by their Secretary, and their sympathy with him under his affliction, and requested him to allow his name to remain as Secretary, with the understanding that he should not be expected to act any further than might be agreeable to him. They adopted these resolutions from a conviction that the interests of the Union would be promoted by the continuance amongst its officers, of the individual, under whose guidance it had, with the Divine blessing, attained the eminence it then occupied; and from a desire to testify, so far as it was in

* Mr. Watson, from this date, prepared the Annual Reports, and read them at the Annual Meetings.

their power, their high esteem, for his long continued, and disinterested labours in the cause of the religious instruction of the young.

This arrangement continued to be acted upon for some years ; but at length Mr. Lloyd expressed his desire that his name should no longer appear as one of the Secretaries to the Union, in consequence of his entire inability to take any part in its proceedings. In complying with this request, the Committee felt it right, to place on their minutes a resolution in which "They most gratefully record the high sense they entertain of the eminent services which, under Divine Providence, he for so many years cheerfully and efficiently rendered in the extension of the influence and usefulness of the Sunday School Union, together with the great benefits which, through his advice, activity and energy, he has been the means of conferring upon Sunday schools both in England and foreign countries."

They also requested Mr. Lloyd to accept the office of honorary member of the Committee, and they had the pleasure of his occasional presence when his health had slightly improved.

Mr. William Groser, who had been for several years a useful member of the Committee, as a representative from the North London Auxiliary, and had acted as secretary to the Sub-Committee, by whom the Library and Reading Room were superintended, was appointed to fill the vacancy caused by Mr. Lloyd's resignation.

The Committee did not appoint any successor to Mr. Wilson. They thought that as he had been engaged for several years in visiting the country, explaining the objects of the Society, recommending the establishment of local Unions, and encouraging Sunday School teachers in their work, it had become less necessary that such agency should be continued. But as they felt some assistance might be usefully rendered to local Unions at their annual meetings, they resolved to send deputations to attend such meetings, whenever requested to do so, hoping that such visits would preserve the local Unions in a state of activity and usefulness, and increase the interest felt in the proceedings of the Parent Institution. Much benefit resulted from this fraternal intercourse, and in consequence of

the facilities afforded by the construction of railways, endeavours were afterwards made to conduct it more systematically, not confining the visits to places where Unions already existed, but extending them, so far as the Committee were able, to all places where it was thought they might be beneficial. The following was the plan adopted: two members of the Committee left London on Saturday afternoon, and devoted the next day to the visitation of as many schools as they found practicable. On the Monday or Tuesday afternoon the deputation met the teachers, and a free and friendly conference took place on various points connected with the extension and improvement of the Sunday school system. These meetings were not intended to be public, because it was desired they should be of a practical character; but they were largely attended, excited much interest in those present, and produced beneficial results. The first visit on this plan was to Leicester, in January, 1844,* and it has been followed by more than 1200 others, in which many thousand teachers in various parts of England, Wales, Scotland, and Ireland, have received, with expressions of great satisfaction, the deputations of the Committee. The character of the meetings has been modified by circumstances; endeavours have been made to secure a meeting on the Saturday evening; the teachers have been invited to assemble on Sunday afternoon, and sometimes an address has been delivered after the evening services, but generally, the plan laid down at the commencement, by the Committee, has been adhered to; and although it has involved a considerable sacrifice of time and labour, on the part of the Committee, and a large expenditure of money from the funds of the Union, yet there can be little doubt that the advantages realized have been fully commensurate. The following instances will furnish specimens of the results:—

At one of the places visited, the Committee were informed that since the visit of the deputation, in one school, a senior girls' class had been formed, and one was in progress for senior boys; in another school, two boxes of movable letters had been purchased; boys' and girls' senior classes had been commenced;

* Messrs. Watson and Cuthbertson were the deputation.

the teachers had consented to attend every Sabbath, instead of alternately, as before, and the teaching was continued during the whole of the Sabbath afternoon instead of requiring the scholars to attend Divine Worship as well as in the morning. The Secretary of one of the country Unions wrote in reference to the visit from a deputation: "Our Sunday School Union, before your coming amongst us, was lifeless, and almost extinct; but now the monthly and quarterly meetings are inquired after with an interest never felt before." The Committee of a Wesleyan Methodist school, in another place, said, in their annual report, "They trust that the recent visit of the deputation from the Sunday School Union to this city will have a beneficial effect. Already the minds of the teachers are aroused to a consideration of the best means of giving efficiency to every department of Sabbath school instruction; and with this view three teachers in one school, and two in another, have recently abandoned the alternating system, and attend every Sabbath." The Committee of one Country Union, reported: "In twelve schools infant classes have been established, in which nearly 1000 infants receive religious instruction. This is a gratifying result of the visit of the deputation from the London Sunday School Union, by whom this step was first urged." There were individual instances, but the general results have been seen in the formation of new Unions; in the increased activity of those previously existing; and in the enlarged demand for the publications of the Union. The course thus adopted by the Committee, has led teachers throughout the country to feel the increasing importance of mutual conference as a means of improving the Sunday School system. Hence, the Committee of the Leeds Union invited deputations, not only from London, but also from Manchester, Halifax, and Hull, to attend their annual meeting, which was thus rendered deeply interesting. The Committee of the Manchester Union took a still bolder step, by summoning representatives from all the surrounding towns to a conference, which commenced at ten o'clock in the morning, and continued, with necessary intervals for refreshment, till ten o'clock at night. It was attended by 300 representatives from thirteen towns,

belonging to fifteen different evangelical denominations, who had, under their superintendence, 148 schools, having 5,895 teachers, and 45,953 scholars. Short papers were read on various practical subjects, followed by a limited discussion on each. The pleasure and profit arising from these gatherings have caused the examples thus set to be extensively followed on subsequent occasions, and in other parts of the country.

Among the visits paid in the year 1845 by deputation from the Committee, was one to Dublin and the North of Ireland, occasioned by intimations that it would be cordially welcomed by the teachers there. Crowded and interesting meetings were accordingly held in Dublin, Newry, Derry, Coleraine, and Belfast. At Dublin, the meeting was attended by five clergymen of the Established Church. At Belfast, the reception of the deputation was most cordial and hospitable. Twelve hundred tickets of admission to the public meeting had been issued, when it became necessary, in consequence of the continued demand, and the inability of the place of meeting to accommodate a larger number, to obtain the use of the largest Presbyterian Church, which was readily granted. At other places visited by similar deputations, a like spirit of brotherly love was manifested; at Dowlais, the clergyman of the parish entertained the deputation at his house, and did all in his power to promote the object of their visit; and at Walsall, the vicar took the chair at the meeting, and, with his curates, entered heartily into the views of those who desired that a Union of the teachers should be formed.

The interesting engagement in which one of the deputations took part at Halifax, deserves particular notice. So much pleasure was received from the celebration of the Jubilee of Sunday schools in that town, in 1831, that it has been repeated since then at intervals of about five years. Its third repetition was fixed for Whit Tuesday, June, 1846, and the attendance of a deputation from the Committee was requested. The schools were accordingly visited on the Sunday, and large assemblages of them afterwards addressed. A Conference of Teachers was held on the Monday evening, and on Tuesday the great festival took place. The Sunday scholars gathered in their respective

school-rooms, where some of them partook of breakfast. At ten o'clock the shops of the town were closed, and the stream of population flowed towards the Piece Hall, a building enclosing an open area of about 260 feet by 220. The Hall consists of open galleries of two, and in some parts, three galleries, at the back of which are small shops, on which stuffs and other similar goods, manufactured in the town, are exposed for sale on the market days : into these galleries the public were admitted as spectators, at prices varying from 2s. 6d., to 6d. each, according to the eligibility of the position. More than 6,000 persons availed themselves of the permission, and upwards of £230 was received, which, after providing for the expenses of the meeting, and for a grant to the Sunday School Union, was divided amongst the schools which attended, in proportion to the number of scholars. At eleven o'clock the schools of the town and neighbourhood commenced entering the area which was turfed and sloped gently from west to east. Many of the country schools were headed by bands of music, which afterwards took their station in a spacious orchestra erected on the east side of the area ; four hymns were then sung, accompanied (except in one verse of each hymn), by more than 200 wind instruments. Lord Morpeth arrived during the singing of the last hymn, and after the engagements had been closed with the National Anthem, addressed a few words to the assembled multitude. In the evening, his lordship presided at a meeting of 1,200 teachers, who had taken tea together, after the labours of this very delightful festival.*

It has been already mentioned that the work of conducting the conferences of Metropolitan teachers which were periodically held in the earlier years of the Union, had generally devolved upon the Committees of the Auxiliaries, but circumstances occasionally arose which seemed to call for a more general gathering. Thus, in the year 1842, the annual report of the Committee adverted to the returns received from the four London Auxiliaries, as showing that above two-thirds of the schools had lending libraries connected with them for the use of the scholars ; that rather more than one-third had select classes for

* Mr. Watson was the deputation

the benefit of elder scholars ; that nearly two-thirds of the teachers were members of Christian churches ; that one-third of the scholars attended morning school, and two-thirds attended afternoon school, on an average of three months. The Committee then appointed, felt it their duty to take into consideration the attendance of scholars, feeling by no means satisfied that so large a proportion should be regularly absent, especially at morning school. A deputation was appointed to confer with the Committee of each Auxiliary, and with the Superintendents and Secretaries of schools ; and such conferences were accordingly held. Other meetings were subsequently convened, when the subject was fully and freely discussed. In some instances, doubts were expressed as to the accuracy of the returns, but further inquiries proved their correctness ; there were, certainly, many schools which had a more numerous attendance, but it was thus evident that other schools must be proportionally deficient in order to produce the general average result. It was found that there were but few schools in which the average morning attendance exceeded one-third of the scholars belonging to them, while in many it fell considerably short of that number. Some matters were suggested by way of explanation of the fact. It was urged, that in many cases, the number of scholars on the books were overrated by sufficient attention not being paid to the removing the names of those scholars who had left the school ; that the late hours to which business is continued on Saturday night, operated injuriously on scholars, parents, and teachers ; that the length of the morning school, combined with public worship, was objected to by some parents and scholars. These considerations certainly deserved attention, but several facts mentioned at the meetings seemed to prove that these circumstances were not sufficient to account for the deficient morning attendance.

Various remedies for the evil were suggested, referring to the parents of the scholars, to the scholars themselves, to the ministers, to the superintendents, and to the teachers ; and it will show the value of an organisation, by which these facts and suggestions were brought to view, to place them on record

for the guidance of teachers, in their endeavours to render their labours more efficient.

With respect to the parents, it was recommended that they should be regularly visited by the teachers, in order to excite in them an interest in the instruction and regular attendance of their children, and to induce them to prepare the children in time for morning school. It was also thought that a quarterly address to parents, connected with the examination of the scholars would be beneficial. The scholars should be encouraged to get their clothes ready on Saturdays, so as to leave as little as possible to be done on Sunday morning. There should also be more solemnity connected with admission to the school, and it would be desirable that their admission should take place at an earlier age, so as to enable the elder scholars to bring their younger brothers and sisters with them, and thus prevent their being detained at home to take care of them. If the scholars were encouraged to enquire after their absent schoolfellows, a beneficial result might be expected. Some striking facts were mentioned at the meetings, showing the influence of the attendance of the minister in the school. The important duties which devolve upon the minister on the Lord's-day, render it difficult for him to interfere, actively, in the school duties; but if he could attend at the time for opening school in the morning, he would find that the teachers and scholars would be alike ashamed of being absent, unless under the pressure of unavoidable circumstances. It is, however, upon the superintendent that the responsibility of conducting the school principally rests. He should feel this, and act up to his station. It is his duty to carry out the regulations of the school with affection, but yet with firmness; he must not be afraid of doing this, even should it compel him to use the language of reproof.

While, however, much advantage would result from the preceding suggestions being acted upon, yet they will fail of securing the end designed, unless the teachers at large are faithful in their engagements. They cannot feel too deeply the importance of their work; it is, on their part a voluntary one. They profess that love to the Saviour, and concern for the temporal, and especially for

the eternal interests of the young, have prompted them to engage in it ; and having undertaken the office, it is no longer a matter of choice with them whether or not they shall discharge its duties. The secret of the non-attendance of scholars will be too often found explained, by the late and irregular attendance of the teachers. It seemed fully established, that when teachers are punctual, the scholars will overcome the difficulties (which are great,) in the way of their attendance, and it was suggested, with reference to teachers, that they should make such arrangements as would prevent hindrances on Sunday morning : all of them should belong to the church with which the school is connected ; there should be a union of feeling amongst them, and the instruction given in the school should be rendered more interesting.

Much benefit resulted from these discussions. The returns obtained for the last three months of the year, showed that the morning attendance had increased to more than one-half, and the afternoon attendance considerably exceeded two-thirds of the scholars on the books. That improvement has, however, not continued, and the deficiency in the average attendance of the scholars, especially in the morning, which is on many accounts the most favourable for instruction, still continues to be a subject of frequent lamentation and complaint, and does not appear to have been at all benefitted by the introduction of the "Saturday Half Holiday."

In the year 1848, the Committee were led to institute an inquiry into the state of the schools in the metropolis, with respect, in the first place, to the number of scholars belonging to them ; and next, as to the efficiency of the instruction imparted in them. The inquiry was commenced by a conference with the Committees of the four London Auxiliaries, held on July 12th and 26th, when a resolution was adopted, unanimously recommending the Auxiliaries to take the subject into consideration, with a view to the submitting the results to a future meeting. In pursuance of this recommendation, ministers and teachers assembled, and looked carefully at the institutions in which they felt so deep an interest, and on which so much

labour had been bestowed ; and their impression was, that while the fullest confidence might be placed in the system as calculated under the Divine blessing to effect the objects it was designed to attain ; yet that it was not carried out to that extent, nor with that efficiency, which seemed necessary to its complete success. The adjourned conference was held on December 19th, and, in pursuance of a resolution then adopted, a general meeting of the members of the Union, was held at Exeter Hall, on February 13th, 1849, when Mr. Lloyd was enabled, after a long absence from the public meetings of the Union, to attend and preside over the deliberations of the large assembly. A statement of the circumstances under which the meeting was convened, was then read, in which the Committee stated they felt themselves compelled to come to the conclusion, that within the limits embraced by the Union, there were at that time more than 100,000 young persons suitable objects for Sunday Schools who were not found within their walls.

Resolutions were adopted at this meeting, urging the securing the co-operation of the societies engaged in domiciliary visitation, instituting an immediate canvass in the neighbourhood of each school, and the giving increased attention to the physical, moral, and religious welfare of the scholars ; requesting the sympathy, guidance, and influence of pastors to bring the churches to consider the school as an important part of their agency in carrying forward the evangelization of the world, and urging teachers to make use of the opportunities for their own improvement, and to shrink from no exertion which was necessary to qualify them for the important station they occupy. These resolutions were communicated to the Committees of the London Auxiliaries, who were requested to bring the subject before the teachers of each individual school in personal conference ; and a letter to teachers was printed, urging the points contained in the resolutions upon their consideration. The attention thus directed to the great number of young persons not enjoying the advantage of Sunday school instruction in the Metropolis, led to very beneficial results ; but before detailing them, it seems impossible to refrain from recording the interesting

proceedings which took place in Peel Park, Salford, on October 10th, 1851, at which Messrs. Groser and Jackson were present.

On the occasion of the visit of the Queen to Manchester, the thought had occurred to a few members of the Manchester Union, and also to Thomas Agnew, Esq., the Mayor of Salford, to gather the Sunday scholars of Manchester and Salford to greet her Majesty. A meeting of the ministers and conductors of the schools was held at the Town Hall, Salford, on August 29th, at which the suggestion of the Mayor was unanimously adopted. Mr. Robert Needham, one of the Secretaries of the Manchester Union, undertook the office of Secretary, and a large subscription was raised for the purpose of erecting an inclined platform to accommodate the whole of the scholars likely to assemble. It was decided to issue a medal commemorative of the event. The verses one and three of the National Anthem were adopted as suitable to be sung on the occasion, and instead of the second verse commencing "O Lord, our God, arise, Scatter her enemies," the following composed by Mr. Charles Swain, was substituted:—

Crowned by a nation's love,
Guarded by heaven above,
Long live the Queen;
Long may each voice exclaim,
Wide as Britannia's fame,
Long live Victoria's name.
God bless the Queen!

An arrangement of the music by Mr. J. Novello was adopted, and the words and music were supplied for sale in the schools which met in the Free Trade Hall, and other places kindly lent gratuitously to afford an opportunity for the scholars rehearsing the Anthem.

The principal platform extended across the park, describing a slight concave. Two smaller ones, having the same lineal extent, but of less depth, were ranged parallel with the front of the large one, the carriage drive being between. The principal platform was 200 yards long, and twenty-seven yards wide, rising four yards six inches. The top and sides of the platform were railed round with substantial railings three feet high, enclosed

with three-quarter-inch boarding, eighteen inches high. The two minor platforms, which ran the whole length, were constructed on the same principle, thirteen yards wide, and rising only three feet six inches high, being separated in the centre by an opening twelve yards wide. The carriage drive was in the centre of the platforms, eight yards wide, made level, and sodded. There was also a space in the centre, between the foot of the platform and the carriage drive, of nine yards, which gradually diminished to six yards at each end. The three platforms were calculated to accommodate 62,000 children, and the level space (also covered with planking, on bearers), 20,000 ; making together a total accommodation for 82,000 persons.

The first school took up its position a quarter before seven o'clock, and was followed in rapid succession by thousands of scholars and teachers, walking eight abreast with their distinctive standards, preceded in most instances by the clergymen and ministers of their respective congregations. By eight o'clock the large platform was nearly filled, and by nine all three were entirely occupied by scholars.

At twenty minutes to ten o'clock, Mr. D. W. Banks, the musical conductor, who had been for weeks indefatigable in his labours, gave the signal from his central stand for a rehearsal. "Never," says Mr. Groser, whose presence at this exciting scene has been already mentioned, "shall we forget the thrill of delight which that beautiful melody, the National Anthem, produced within us, as it rolled in admirable time and tone from 80,000, mostly youthful, voices." "Such a scene, and such a song," said a Sunday school veteran of fifty years standing, "was worth going to America for."

At a quarter past eleven o'clock the Queen, Prince Albert, and their two elder children, arrived, being preceded by the Mayor of Salford, and the High Sheriff of the county, and followed by the Dukes of Wellington and Norfolk, Earls Grey, Carlisle, and Ellesmere, the Marquis of Westminster, and several ladies in attendance. Her majesty passed round the park to the pavilion, where addresses were presented by the corporation

of Salford, and then entered the carriage drive between the platforms; immediately, as with one voice, broke forth the first line, "God save our gracious Queen," the whole verse being effectively and touchingly sung. The Queen halted a moment to survey an assemblage of a character unprecedented, it may be, in the history of her kingdoms, when the enthusiasm of her young subjects could be no longer restrained; and a great portion of the children burst forth from the metrical and musical measures in which their voices were to find utterance, and cheered with all the breath in their little bosoms. The Queen, laughing with pleasant appreciation of their so immoderate loyalty, bowed over and over again to their intense delight, and passed on.

The scene made a lively impression on all present. Copies, in gold, of the medals issued on the occasion, were presented by the Mayor of Salford to the Queen, on behalf of the Prince of Wales and Princess Royal, with an address, which was graciously received. On her return to London, her Majesty desired that the particulars of the schools present on the occasion might be furnished to her. They were in number 222, and comprised twenty-one denominations.

It is painful to record, that Mr. Needham spent his last days in this service; the labour proved too much for him. Immediately afterwards he went to the sea-side, and appeared to have recovered strength; but shortly after his return, fever came on, and on December 20th he entered into rest, at the early age of thirty-three years.

The anxiety which had been excited by the information given to the general meeting in 1849, as to the number of young persons in London who did not participate in the advantages of Sunday schools, was increased by the education statistics, collected in connection with the Census of 1851. Those returns occupied much of the attention of the Committee, and they proposed for discussion, at a Conference held in the morning of the Anniversary in 1854:—"The results of the late Census relating to Sunday schools and public worship, in connection with the duties, which they suggest to Sunday School teachers."

One of the secretaries of the Birmingham Union was present, and took part in the proceedings, and another secretary was present when the subject occupied the attention of the Committee.

The impressions thus received, were carried back with them, and they made known the thoughts which had been so stirred up. Gradually the importance of the fact came to be felt, that although Birmingham occupies by no means the most unfavourable position, having with a population of 232,841, 21,406 Sunday scholars, or 1 in about $10\frac{1}{2}$ of the community, yet that there must be in the town from 12,000 to 18,000 young people who ought to be in the schools and were not. The result of repeated Conferences was, that forty-two schools concurred in attempting a general canvass of the town. An address to the inhabitants was written by the Rev. J. A. James, and an aggregate meeting of the canvassers having been held for prayer, on April 11, in Carr's Lane Lecture Room, the canvass commenced on the following Lord's day morning, after early prayer meetings in some of the schools, and special prayer in all. About 1,000 canvassers were employed, 30,000 homes visited, and upwards of 7,000 scholars gained to the schools a very large proportion of whom were retained.

The gratifying result of this movement was pondered over by several members of the Committee appointed in 1855, one of whom brought the subject forward at the first meeting succeeding their appointment. It was considered with the prayerful anxiety which so vast a work required. The necessity could not be questioned in face of the revelation of the Census, that the Sunday schools of London only contained 1 in $17\frac{1}{2}$ of the population: but the attempt to canvass two and a half millions of people appeared almost impracticable. However, the difficulties gradually appeared to diminish, and in July the Committee resolved, in dependence upon Divine help, to undertake the work. They invited a conference with the Committee of the Church of England Sunday School Institute, in order to secure the assistance of the schools connected with that Society, but that Committee declined to take any active part in the canvass,

although expressing much sympathy with the efforts. A meeting of the ministers and office bearers of the churches in London, with the superintendents and secretaries, and the Committees of the four London Auxiliaries, was held to confer with the Committee as to the best means of carrying out this great undertaking, and encouraged by the determination then expressed to support the Committee in the movement, they proceeded to carry it out. Seventy-five thousand copies of an appeal to the Christians of London for personal aid in the undertaking, were circulated, and an Address to Parents was written by the Rev. Samuel Martin, and 400,000 copies printed for distribution. Seven thousand memorandum books were prepared for the use of the canvassers, and a like number of books containing forms of recommendations, to be left with the parents of children promised to be sent to school. Numerous meetings for special prayer were held during the week preceding Sunday, 20th April, 1856, on which day more than 6,000 Christian labourers commenced their perambulations through the streets and lanes of the Metropolis, with the view of bringing into the Sunday school those who had been hitherto destitute of its advantages, and it was the conviction of the Committee, that there were thus added to the schools of the Metropolis, not less than 20,000 scholars.

It was not to be expected that such a noble effort would be made, without its stimulating other cities and towns to imitate the example. More than twenty places were reported to the Committee, in which a similar canvass had been made, and with like general results, although sometimes the gratifying fact was brought out, that nearly the whole available population was already in Sunday schools. At Manchester, the meeting held on the subject was presided over by the Lord Bishop of the Diocese, and both there and in Liverpool the members of the Church of England entered heartily into the effort.

Among the indirect advantages of the canvass, may be mentioned the securing large number of additional teachers, the awakening a considerable amount of interest on behalf of the Sunday school cause, among the churches and congregations of

the Metropolis, and the displaying the Catholic character of the Union. It was perceived by some who would not co-operate in the canvass, that this had no influence on the minds of the canvassers, and that where there was no preference on the part of the parents, the children were recommended to the nearest evangelical school without any regard to denominational distinctions.

In the year 1852, the Earl of Roden resigned the office of President which he had filled for a period of twenty-five years. Mr. W. B. Gurney was requested to become the President, and Mr. Alderman Challis succeeded to the office of Treasurer of the funds of the Union.

CHAPTER VIII.

THE GENERAL EDUCATION OF THE PEOPLE.

CONTENTS :—Reason for interference with the subject—Mr. Henry Brougham, “Bill for better providing the means of Education for his Majesty’s Subjects”—Opinions of the Clergy and Dissenters thereon—Action of the Committee of the Union—Mr. Brougham and Sunday Schools—Visits a School in Drury Lane—Meeting of Members of the Union—Measure withdrawn—Returns by Parish Officers—Renewed efforts of Lord Chancellor Brougham—Examination of measure by Committee—Extracts from Foster on Popular Ignorance—Irish Education Board—Similar plan for England approved—Grant for Educational Purposes—Opposition of Clergy unsuccessful—The Factory Bill—Its injurious effects on Sunday Schools—Opposed by the Union—Resolutions passed at Members’ Meeting—Measure withdrawn—Congratulations thereon.

THE successive Committees of the Union have ever kept in view the objects sought by its formation, the extension and improvement of Sunday Schools. The direct means by which they have sought to obtain those objects have been detailed in previous chapters ; but there have been some measures brought forward at various periods, which have appeared to them so calculated to exert an important influence on these institutions, that they have felt compelled, very reluctantly, to turn aside from that which they considered their special work, and give their attention to matters having only an indirect connexion with it. The first subject of this nature to which the notice of the Union was called, and which has in succeeding years frequently occupied much time and thought, was that very important one, the general education of the people of this country.

In the Sessions of Parliament held during the year 1820, Mr. Henry Brougham brought forward his measure for better

providing the means of education for His Majesty's subjects. A Committee of the House of Commons had been previously engaged in inquiries as to the state of education. The bill brought in by that gentleman, as amended in Committee, provided that a complaint of the want of schools might be made to the quarter sessions, by a grand jury, justice, minister, or householder. The justices were then to try the complaint; and if they determined that it was well founded, they were to issue a warrant to the receiver-general of the land tax, requiring him to advance the sum necessary to purchase land and build a school-room. This advance was to be repaid out of the Consolidated Fund. The salaries of the masters were to be raised by the churchwardens, under a warrant of the justices, and to be paid half-yearly. The masters were to be chosen by the majority of householders present at a meeting in the school-house; to which meeting, persons having real property in the parish to the amount of £100 per annum, were allowed to send a representative. The name of the party chosen was to be sent to the rector, vicar, perpetual curate, curate, or other resident officiating minister; and if he objected to the party elected, a fresh election was to take place; and so on, in like manner, as often as the person chosen and reported should not be approved of by the resident officiating minister, and until he should approve of the person elected. It was provided, that no person should be capable of being chosen by such meeting under the age of twenty-four, or above the age of forty; or who did not produce a certificate of his character and ability, and that he was a member of the Church of England by law established, signed by the resident officiating minister and three landholders of the parish where he had lived for the last twelve months. The clergyman of the parish for which the master was chosen was declared ineligible for the office; but any other clergyman might be elected. It was further provided, that the master should teach the Holy Scriptures according to the authorized version, and use select passages thereof for reading and writing; and should teach no other book of religion, without the consent of the resident

officiating minister ; and should use no form of prayer or worship, except the Lord's prayer, or other select passages of the Holy Scriptures. The catechism of the Church of England, and such portions of its liturgy as the resident officiating minister might appoint, were to be taught during the half of the school hours of one day in the week, to be fixed by the minister ; to whom the right of visitation and examination of the school was given, and who was also to have the power to direct the teaching of the catechism and liturgy by the master on the evening of the Lord's-day. The scholars were to attend the divine service of the Church of England once every Lord's-day. Parents and guardians, however, might withdraw their children from the teaching of the catechism and liturgy, and from attendance on such divine service, on their taking care that the scholars so withdrawn should attend some other place of Christian worship.

The power of dismissing the master was vested in the bishop of the diocese, either personally, or through his archdeacon, chancellor, or dean.

This measure did not meet with general acceptance. It was looked upon with suspicion by the members of the Church of England ; probably on account of the quarter from which it came. The following extract from a pamphlet, written by the Rev. R. Lloyd, A.M., rector of St. Dunstan's-in-the-West, will show the character of the objections stated against it :—"The nature of Mr. Brougham's plan of instruction does not, as far as I can perceive, essentially differ from the Lancasterian, or British School. Whilst it admits some select portions of the Scriptures to be used, it prohibits all notes and comments, all explications whatever illustrative of their sense ; under the influence of a morbid and symbolizing liberality, which renounces what is peculiar, and adopts only what is common to all sects and parties. He has, indeed, made some concession in favour of our ecclesiastical establishment, in order, it seems, to render his bill more palatable to its members ; but these concessions, which affect to relieve it of its obnoxious qualities, produce no such effect."

The Dissenters, on the other hand, complained of the measure, as giving an undue preponderance in the education of the people to the Established Church ; inasmuch as the master was required to be a member of that Church, the schools were to be placed under clerical and episcopal control, and the provisions introduced for relieving the children of Dissenters would, if made use of, only expose such children to painful observations.

The Committee of the Sunday School Union appointed a Sub-Committee to watch the progress of the bill ; and having obtained a copy, examined it, in reference to its effect on Sunday Schools. They soon came to the conclusion that it must be most injurious ; as it would withdraw the scholars, and undermine the foundations of benevolent and gratuitous instruction. They thought that the measure would deprive Sunday scholars of the invaluable means of moral and religious instruction they now enjoyed, without providing any substitute ; that the mere repetition of catechism, attendance at public worship, and the routine of mechanical instruction by a paid master, was very far inferior to the unbought and inestimable labours of teachers who love their youthful charge, feel deeply concerned for their immortal welfare, and from principle devote themselves unremittingly to promote the benefit of the children whom they have voluntarily engaged to instruct.

The result of this measure, as it respected Sunday Schools, was pointed out to its author. His reply was, " Oh, they were only for the occasion : when the bill passes, there will be no more occasion for them." He was told, " If you lose our Sunday Schools, you will lose one of the best bonds of society, for these voluntary teachers "——" Voluntary teachers !" he exclaimed, " what do you mean ? I don't understand what you mean by voluntary teachers." Some explanations were then given as to the constitution of Sunday Schools : and with a view to further information, Mr. Butterworth requested him to visit a school in Drury Lane, in which that gentleman took great interest ; and then, for the first time, did the talented author of the bill become aware of the beneficial influence which the labours

of gratuitous teachers were exerting upon the rising generation of our land.

A general meeting of the gratuitous Sunday School teachers of London and its vicinity, was convened on the 16th of February, 1821, at which, resolutions were adopted, embodying the objections against the bill entertained by the Committee, and instructing them to use the most energetic means to oppose its progress. It did not, however, become necessary to take any further steps, as Mr. Brougham was deterred, by the resistance which had been excited, and did not again bring forward the measure.

The report presented to the Annual Meeting in 1836, adverted to the returns on the subject of education, which had been obtained through the medium of the Parish Officers, in the year 1833, and presented to parliament, and which were the most complete that had been published. They showed that in England 1 in $10\frac{1}{2}$, and in Wales 1 in $14\frac{3}{4}$ of the population were receiving daily instruction, and that the Sunday Schools in England contained 1 in $9\frac{1}{2}$, and those of Wales 1 in $4\frac{1}{2}$, of the population. This extraordinary fact with respect to Wales, shows, that in that country the Sunday Schools comprise the adults, as well as the youthful population. The total number of Sunday Schools in England and Wales, was reported to be 16,828, containing 1,548,890 scholars, the population being then estimated at 14,400,000.

Mr. Brougham having been raised to the highest post in his profession, the Lord Chancellorship, was, according to custom, created a peer, of the title of Lord Brougham. He still continued his active efforts on behalf of the general education of the people, and in the year 1836, presented to the House of Lords a Bill for providing a system of National Education. A Sub-Committee was appointed to examine the Bill, and watch its progress. They found that it exhibited a vast improvement on the plan proposed by the noble lord, while a member of the House of Commons; but feared it would not be found acceptable to those who felt most concerned for the religious education of the people. The Bill, however, was not proceeded

with, so that the further interference of the Committee was not necessary.

With the year 1843, commenced a struggle on the subject of national education, into which the Committee felt themselves bound to enter, and which brought upon the Union, indirectly, the severest trial which it had yet had to endure, and which seemed at one time to peril its very existence. The Government were frequently reproached for their inertness in reference to the general education of the people. John Foster, in his *Essay on the Evils of Popular Ignorance* (p. 307, second edition, 1821), observed, "It is matter for never-ending amazement that, during one generation after another, the presiding wisdom in this chief of Christian and Protestant States should have thrown out the living strength of that State into almost every mode of agency under heaven, rather than that of promoting the state itself to the condition of a happy community of civilized beings. What stupendous infatuation, what disastrous ascendancy of the powers of darkness, that this energy should have been sent forth to pervade all parts of the world in quest of objects to inspire and accomplish innumerable projects, political and military, and to lavish itself, even to exhaustion and fainting at its vital source, on every alien interest; while here, at home, so large a part of the social body was, in a moral and intellectual sense, dying and putrifying over the land. And it was thus perishing for want of the vivifying principle of knowledge, while one-fifth of this mighty amount of exertion would have been sufficient to diffuse it into every corner and cottage of the island. Within its circuit a countless multitude were seen passing away their mortal existence, little better in any way than mere sentient shapes of matter, and by their depravity inexpressibly worse; and yet this hideous fact had not the weight of the very dust of the balance in the deliberation whether a grand exertion of the national vigour and resources could have any object so worthy (with God for the judge), as some scheme of foreign aggrandisement, some interference in remote quarrels, or avengement by anticipation of wrongs pretended to be

foreseen, or the obstinate prosecution of some fatal career, begun in the very levity of pride, by a decision in which some individual or party in the ascendancy, had the influence to obtain a corrupt or deluded concurrence."

What, however, the state of parties seemed to render hopeless in England, was, in the process of years, adopted as a sort of panacea for the ecclesiastical antipathies of the sister island. The Government had for many years assisted by annual grants a voluntary institution, known by the name of "The Kildare Place Society," which carried on a system of education with great energy and success. But the schools thus established were conducted on exclusively Protestant principles, and a daily increasing spirit of opposition was raised against the public money being thus applied. Three courses were then open to the legislature—to assist exclusively Roman Catholic schools as well as exclusively Protestant ones, or to withdraw public assistance from all educational efforts, or to construct a plan by which the schools might be open to all without injury being done to the religious convictions of the parents. The feelings of the people generally revolted against the adoption of either of the first two courses; and the third, which seemed under the peculiar circumstances of Ireland the only one which could be carried out with any hope of success, was accepted by the Roman Catholic clergy in general, and an influential portion of the Established clergy and the Presbyterian ministers. In England, this plan—a plan of Government education, meddling with religion, and calculated to throw increased resources into the hands of the Roman Catholic priests—met with opposition chiefly from the Established clergy, and was warmly supported by Protestant Dissenters. An ably-conducted journal, the influence of which had been steadily used in support of the cause of education, and which afterwards became the most zealous opponent of Government interference in education, wrote thus in 1839:—"We call upon the public to observe that if cavilling like the above," (the editor is referring to some resolutions adopted by the Wesleyan body) "is to succeed in obstructing the Government plan, the

effect will be altogether to prevent any aid being given by Government to the education of the people. Are the public of opinion that this important matter should be wholly neglected? Do they think we can prudently or safely neglect it? Do they think that Government has no duty to perform towards the people, or towards itself, in regard to education? Is every attempt to aid in instructing the people, however guarded, however limited, however sedulously impartial, to be clamoured down by bigotry? Is every plan that may be devised to be strangled, however confessedly just in its great principles, because there is a possibility of abuse?"

It is unnecessary to trace the history of the Irish Education Board, which, amidst many difficulties, has steadily pursued its labours. There cannot be a reasonable doubt that the schools thus established had, amongst other benefits, a tendency to mitigate the rancour of religious animosity in the sister island. But those benefits would, probably, have been greater had the Established clergy generally entered more heartily into the project, so as to secure their due influence in the management of the schools. In consequence of their standing aloof at the outset, added to the numerical superiority of the Roman Catholic body, the latter has been the chief gainer by it. The number of schools under the superintendence of the Board has continued to increase.

The Government were sufficiently encouraged by the reception of the Irish plan to attempt some experiment of a similar description in England. Warned by the fate of previous efforts, which had failed through attempting too much, Lord Melbourne's Administration in 1839, to avoid alarming the apprehensive, confined themselves to the smallest measure and most innoxious mode of interference. They contented themselves with proposing to Parliament a small annual grant of £30,000, to be distributed in aid of the expense of erecting school rooms. The object appeared not merely harmless, but even commendable. The regulations seemed just and reasonable. Everyone admitted the propriety of Government seeing that the grants thus made were properly applied, and to

superintend their administration a Committee of the Privy Council was constituted by an Order of the Council. Here, again, the measures of the Government found their principal opponents in the clergy of the Established Church. An address, moved by the Archbishop of Canterbury, was presented to Her Majesty from the House of Lords, condemning the appointment of the Committee of the Privy Council. The grant proposed was, however, carried in the House of Commons by a small majority, the opposition made was gradually neutralised, and in subsequent years the amount granted was considerably increased. The Dissenting bodies generally did not see any objection to the acceptance of the assistance thus proffered, and availed themselves of it to a considerable extent in the erection of school rooms.

The public mind having thus become familiarised with the interference of Government, it was thought that the time had arrived when a more decided advance might be made towards establishing a national system of education. Her Majesty's Government, in the year 1843, introduced in the House of Commons, "A Bill for regulating the employment of children and young persons in factories, and for the better education of children in factory districts." This Bill proposed to establish schools, to be managed by a board of seven trustees, consisting of a clergyman (who was to be the permanent chairman), two churchwardens, and four individuals named by the justices of the peace. The catechism and liturgy of the Church of England were to be used in the schools, and the children were to attend the school three hours on a Sunday, and to attend public worship according to the rites of the Established Church. The masters of factories were to be prohibited from employing children, without a certificate of attendance at these schools. The schools were to be erected and supported, to some extent, out of the poor rates, at the direction of the Committee of Privy Council for Education. The parents of children neglecting to attend school were to be subjected to penalties. The Bill also provided that National and British schools, which the Government Inspectors declared to be

efficiently conducted, should be entitled to give school certificates to the children attending such schools, and those children were to be exempted from learning the catechism and liturgy, and attending public worship, whose parents objected on religious grounds.

As soon as this measure was brought to the notice of the Committee, they examined it, with a view to ascertain its probable influence on the institutions over which it was their duty to watch. They found that the provisions of the Bill would be applicable to every place in Great Britain which contained any building in which steam, water, or any other mechanical power, should be used to move or work any machinery, employed in any way, in the manufacture of cotton, wool, linen, silk, flax, tow, hemp, or jute; and that the schools proposed to be established were intended to receive not only the children employed in factories, but all other children who might desire admission. A very large proportion of the youthful population might, therefore, be expected to find their way into them, and would thus be withdrawn from Sunday Schools, in which their religious instruction was being conducted, with advantages which would not be realized under the proposed system. The Committee, therefore, presented a petition to the House of Commons, setting forth the advantages attending the Sunday School system, and their apprehensions as to the injurious influence which would be exercised upon it by the provisions of the Government Bill. They submitted that the requiring the scholars to attend the schools on Sundays was unnecessary, and inexpedient and inconsistent with the great principle of religious liberty; and, therefore, prayed that the clause of the Bill which required the attendance of the scholars on Sundays might be expunged. It will be observed, that the petition was confined to one single point of objection; not because the Committee were insensible to other grounds of complaint, but because they deemed it most consistent with their character, as a representative body, appointed to watch over the interests of Sunday Schools, to protest distinctly against that part of the Bill which directly affected these

Institutions, leaving their constituents at liberty to act in respect to the measure, in other respects, as they might themselves think right.

The Committee, did not, however, satisfy themselves with merely preparing the petition. They transmitted a copy of it, with a copy of the Bill, and a letter pointing out its injurious influence on Sunday Schools, to every Union in the country, requesting that a meeting of the respective Committees might be held to take the subject into their consideration. The result of these communications, was the holding a great number of meetings, in various parts of the country, at which it was determined to present petitions against the Bill.

The Petition of the Committee was presented to the House of Commons, by Benjamin Hawes, Esq., and, at his request, read at length at the table of the House. In the course of the debate, which took place on that evening, Sir James Graham stated that it was not intended to compel those children to attend the school on Sundays, whose parents objected on religious grounds. This explanation, although satisfactory to a certain extent, fell very far short of meeting the wishes of the Committee. There is a superiority in the system of gratuitous Sunday School teaching, which would render it a matter of regret if any children were prevented from partaking of its benefits. It was evident that such must be the case, if schools were established according to the provisions of this Bill. The scholars, in Sunday Schools connected with the Church of England, would be withdrawn to these new schools, because their parents would not be able to state that they objected on religious grounds, to the instruction imparted. But a very large number of the parents of Sunday scholars do not feel sufficient interest in the instruction of their children to induce them to make the objection which would be necessary to exempt them from attendance at these schools. And many dissenting parents, also, would be unwilling, or afraid to make an objection which might be displeasing to those who had care of their children during the week. Thus great numbers of Sunday

scholars would lose the benefit of the instructions they were receiving from gratuitous teachers.

The petition thus presented to the House of Commons from the Committee, succeeded in drawing attention to the injurious tendency of the Bill in reference to Sunday Schools. One of the public journals which had warmly advocated the system proposed in the Bill, in commenting upon [the debate which took place upon its second reading, made the following remarks, which are gratifying as showing the impression produced by the statements in the Petition.

“Another change which is called for in the Bill, was pointed out by Sir George Grey. The children belonging to the Church, attending the new schools, are to be compelled to attend on Sundays. This is an arrangement bad in itself, and one which will interfere injuriously with existing Sunday Schools. The Committee of the Sunday School Union have published a petition on the subject, which states very clearly and temperately the objections to such a regulation, and which is worthy of the best attention of government and parliament. The Sunday School system is attended with indirect advantages, even more important than the amount of instruction which it imparts. It binds different classes of society together by the strongest feelings of benevolent sympathy on one side, and grateful attachment on the other. We have no reliance on the voluntary principle as regards the general education of the people, but that principle is the life and essence of the Sunday school.

“There are at present nearly 17,000 Sunday schools in England and Wales, attended by upwards of a million and a half of scholars. By far the larger number of these schools are conducted by unpaid teachers. Young men and young women, some belonging to the poorer, and others belonging to the wealthier classes, regularly devote a considerable portion of the Sunday, to the religious instruction of the poor. No fame attends those exertions, and there can be no motive for them but a sense of duty, or the pleasure of a benevolent work. Such exertions could not be purchased by money, nor could an

Act of Parliament call them into existence. Sunday schools might be established by law, but law could not make Sunday school teaching what it now is, a labour of love; and it could not, therefore, create the affectionate relations which now subsists between the teacher and the taught. Those who have seen nothing of such schools, can hardly conceive the strong and warm attachment which grows up in the bosoms of poor children, for a kind and judicious teacher. Feelings of this sort are of inestimable value in cementing the different orders of society together, especially when so many circumstances tend to separate them. An interference with the present Sunday schools, therefore, would be most improper and injudicious. Many children, who would be considered members of the Church, now attend Sunday schools, where they are instructed in the tenets which the Church holds in common with Dissenters. To compel them to withdraw from such schools, to break off their connection with their favorite teachers, and to discourage the admirable voluntary exertions which have done so much, would be an evil, which we trust the government will see the necessity of avoiding. The new schools may be opened on Sunday for such as chose to come to them, but the Sunday instruction will be most effectual, when it is voluntarily given and voluntarily received."

As the nature of the educational clauses in the Bill became better known, the opposition to them increased and strengthened, and in compliance with many urgent appeals, the Committee convened a general meeting of the Union in the 12th of April. At that meeting, over which Charles Hindley Esq., M.P., presided, the following resolutions were unanimously adopted:—

I. That this meeting of Sunday school teachers, desires to bear witness, from their personal experience and observation, to the vast importance of the present system of Sunday schools, in promoting the cause of evangelical religion, of sound morals, of civil security, and of social improvement. These beneficial results they believe to have an intimate connexion with the principle of employing a voluntary and unpaid agency, by which a parental interest is often created on the part of the teacher,

and a filial affection awakened in the heart of the scholar ; and which is also eminently a means of moral and religious impression, as well as of literary instruction. These important advantages a paid agency could never realize. It is therefore, the deliberate conviction of this meeting that the adoption of any scheme of national education which shall have the effect of weakening, superseding, or destroying the existing system of Sunday schools, will be a great national calamity.

II. That this meeting, feeling deeply the importance of general education, would rejoice in the greater facilities which might thus be afforded for the success of Sunday schools in their higher object; but they do not believe that the means proposed in the "Bill for regulating the employment of children and young persons in Factories, and for the education of children in Factory Districts," are at all adequate to this end ; because,—

1. This Bill violates the principles of religious liberty and Christian Union, by placing the sole superintendence, and practically, the entire management of education, in the hands of only one section of the Christian Church; by which it would be likely to increase existing religious differences, rather than to promote kind and Christian rivalry in the work of doing good to all.
2. It confers great and unprecedented powers, associated with inadequate control, and practical irresponsibility, which have a natural tendency to produce oppression, neglect, and abuses without number.
3. The clauses which are intended to shield dissenters against encroachments on the rights of conscience, would be inefficient on practice; because on the one hand, there would be power, influence, the secular arm, and the public purse; on the other, there would generally be timidity, dependency, and poverty.
4. Schools established under such unfair advantages, would frequently fall under the superintendence of those who conscientiously disapprove of all lay agency in religious teaching, and who would, therefore, use all the power and

influence with which they would be invested, to supersede and destroy existing Sunday schools.

III. That if, under ordinary circumstances, the adoption of such a scheme of national education should be regarded as a national calamity, its results, under the extraordinary circumstances of the present time, ought to be viewed with much greater alarm and dread; inasmuch as the powers given by the proposed Bill would, in a vast and increasing number of instances, be wielded by a restless, active, and enthusiastic party, who repudiate the name of Protestant, deny, pervert, or conceal the doctrines of the Reformation, and leave no efforts untried, and no class of society unassailed, in order to promote the growth, progress, and universal prevalence of their religious sentiments.

IV. That these resolutions be communicated by the Chairman to the Secretary of State for the Home Department; that copies be sent to the Members of both Houses of Parliament; and addressed, by advertisement or otherwise, to Sunday school teachers throughout the kingdom, recommending them to petition Parliament, without delay, against all those provisions of the Bill which directly, or indirectly, tend to the injury or ruin of existing Sunday schools; praying that they may never become a part of the law of Great Britain."

The measures which had been adopted by the Committee, were reported to the Annual Meeting, over which Lord Morpeth (afterwards the Earl of Carlisle) presided, and were cordially approved by the meeting, which these discussions rendered more than usually exciting. The Committee then appointed were instructed to watch the further progress of the Bill, with special reference to its probable influence on Sunday schools; and they accordingly, at their first meeting, examined with care the amendment which had been made in it, with a view to disarm opposition. They were gratified by finding that, in compliance with the prayer of the petition presented to the House of Commons by the previous Committee, the clause requiring the attendance on Sundays of the scholars in the schools proposed to be established, was expunged, and such attendance left perfectly free. It became, therefore, a matter

of anxious inquiry with the Committee, whether or not, under these circumstances, they were justified in further interference; but they came to the conclusion that the result of the measure, even in its amended form, must be prejudicial, if not fatal, to all Sunday schools conducted by gratuitous teachers; that if these new schools were well conducted, as might be fairly expected, from their command of pecuniary resources, they would gradually destroy all other schools, and that the scholars would be induced to attend on Sundays, and thus lose the advantages which the present Sunday school system affords. The Committee therefore determined to continue their opposition; they transmitted to the country Unions a statement of their own views of the injurious tendency of the amended Bill, and requested them to give it a careful consideration. They also determined to present a petition to the House of Commons; stating their objections to the measure; and they convened a General Meeting of the members of the Union on Thursday, June 13th, when Charles Hindley, Esq., M.P., presided, and a series of resolutions were adopted, embodying the objections entertained to the Bill, as amended. The measure itself, which had excited such general alarm amongst the teachers and friends of Sunday schools, was shortly afterwards withdrawn by the government, who thought it prudent to wait for a more convenient season for prosecuting their plans for carrying out system of national education.

Upon this withdrawal, the Committee recorded their high satisfaction at the promptitude with which the teachers of the Metropolis and the country arose to exertion as soon as the cry was raised that Sunday schools were in danger; and at the untiring zeal displayed in the continued resistance to the impending evil. The Committee conveyed to them their warm congratulations on the successful results of the efforts thus made, and on the constitutional deference to public opinion displayed by the government. But the Committee desired chiefly to cherish a deep feeling of gratitude to Divine Providence for this happy averting of the threatened danger; and they trusted that publicly, in every suitable manner, whether at the teachers'

usual prayer meetings, or at special meetings held for that purpose, their friends would join them in the expression of their thanksgivings to Almighty God.

The thanks of the Committee were also tendered to those Members of Parliament who had rendered such important aid in presenting petitions against the measure, in attending the public meetings held in reference thereto, and for their liberal advocacy in the Commons House of Parliament; especially to Charles Hindley, Esq., and Benjamin Hawes, Esq., who had taken a peculiar interest in the efforts of the Committee.

The third resolution adopted by the Committee may be very suitably recorded at length.

“That this Committee would reiterate the expression of their deep anxiety for the extension of popular education by all appropriate means. But especially it is their desire and hope that this concern will be practically manifested by their friends in the establishment of additional Sunday schools; in the active promotion and support of suitable day schools; in the employment of a larger body of carefully selected teachers; in the more efficient supervision of the schools; and especially in greater diligence and perseverance in the private and devotional preparation of Sunday school teachers for their regular and ordinary duties in the class. It is only by the use of such means that we can hope by the blessing of God, more abundantly to succeed in extending the invaluable benefits of religious instruction.”

CHAPTER IX.

THE UNION—NATIONAL EDUCATION—AND OBSERVANCE OF
THE SABBATH.

CONTENTS :—The Catechism of the Church of England an element in the strife—The Government Grant increased—Minutes of Committee of Council on Education—The Position of the Union—Extracts from Pamphlet—Resolution passed at Annual Meeting—Memorial to Committee of Council on Education—Interview with the Lord President—OBSERVANCE OF LORD'S-DAY—Proposed Race Course at Notting Hill—The Post Office—Memorials and Meeting—Determination of Government to proceed—The Crystal Palace Charter—Clause to open it on Lord's-day opposed effectually—Penny Postage—Hampton Court—Kew Gardens—British Museum—National Gallery—Meeting and numerous Petitions thereon—Motion defeated—Military Bands, &c.

THE withdrawal of the Factory Districts' Education Bill did not cause the feeling which had been excited by its introduction to subside; and the Committee, upon whom now devolved the management of the Union's affairs, were exposed to a scene of trial which had never before occurred during the existence of the Society. It will be recollected that in the schools proposed to be established, the Church of England catechism was required to be taught; and although provision was made for exempting scholars from learning that catechism whose parents objected on religious grounds, it was considered probable, that from various causes, but few parents would feel disposed to avail themselves of this privilege, and that practically the catechism would be taught generally to the scholars.

There is no doubt that this consideration tended greatly to intensify the opposition to the measure on the part of those who considered that the doctrine of baptismal regeneration was taught by that catechism. Such was not the ground, however, on which the opposition of the Union had been based. The

resistance of the Committee would have been quite as firm had any other catechism been selected, or even if catechisms had been altogether excluded. They opposed the establishment of the proposed schools because they conceived that insensibly the scholars would be drawn into them on Sundays; that thus they would be deprived of the gratuitous labours of their present teachers, for which loss no adequate compensation would be found in the instructions of the conductors of those schools.

As the discussions which ensued, relative to the sale of the Church of England catechism, have already been recorded, it is not necessary again to advert to them. The trial was a severe one, but the determination to adhere to the catholic principles of the Union triumphed, and the institution probably derived much ultimate benefit from the evidence thus afforded, as to the soundness and strength of the principles on which it was founded, and by which its proceedings have been regulated.

In the year 1846, the subject of the general education of the people again occupied attention. The government had succeeded in inducing Parliament gradually to increase the amount placed at the disposal of the Education Committee of the Privy Council; and that body now thought that they might take a very decided step towards bringing the education of the people under governmental control. Warned by the fate which had attended the Factory Districts' Education Bill, they carefully abstained from consulting Parliament as to the course intended to be pursued, but agreed to certain minutes which provided for the employment of the money which might be voted in aid of education, in a mode very different from that in which former grants had been applied. Those grants had been expended in aiding the erection of school buildings, the Government retaining the right of inspecting the schools, but without interfering in their management. By these new minutes it was proposed that the Committee of the Privy Council on Education should give salaries to monitors and apprenticed pupil teachers; that gratuities and pensions should be given to schoolmasters; and that means should be adopted for providing for the further instruction and future support of the pupil teachers after their

apprenticeship had been completed; the Committee were also to establish industrial schools. The adoption of these plans was justified on the ground that the state of education of the people of England was very unsatisfactory; that voluntary efforts to improve it had failed, and would never be sufficient to meet the necessity; and that therefore it was the duty of the state to interpose its aid. As might be supposed, these propositions did not meet with universal concurrence, and a renewed conflict took place between the advocates of state-supported education on the one hand, and those who thought that voluntary efforts were adequate to meet the necessity, on the other. The Committee of the Union were strongly urged to take part in the strife, and to lend the aid which their organization presents, to the exertions made to prevent the minutes being carried into operation. On careful consideration, however, it did not appear that these measures, whatever might be their effect on daily schools, had such a bearing on Sunday schools as would justify interference on the part of the Committee. The teachers connected with the Union are combined for a specific object, with a distinct understanding that they are not thereby committed to any measures not directly connected with that object, while at the same time no restraint is placed on their individual action.

The institution has prospered by a strict adherence to these principles, and the day on which they may be violated will be an evil one for the Union, inasmuch as they constitute the only safe ground on which such an association can rest. Among the publications issued in the course of these discussions, was a semi-official pamphlet in explanation and defence of the Minutes of Council, entitled "The School, in its Relation to the State, the Church, and the Congregation;" in which the Sunday school was adverted to in a manner, evidencing that its value was becoming more apparent. The writer says:—

"Towards the close of the eighteenth century, the church and the religious congregations of England, took the first step towards a provision for the education of the poor, by the creation of Sunday schools. These important institutions were the spontaneous growth of the zeal of religious communities for the

diffusion of Scriptural knowledge, and were the first advance towards the cardinal idea, that the school is an inseparable element for the organization of a Christian congregation. Founded on a conception which has such vast relations (though then imperfectly foreseen), and fostered by intense religious zeal, the Sunday school, especially in the north and west of England, and in the seats of manufacture and mining, has supplied a means for the religious instruction of the people, which may probably, by the good providence of God, have contributed to save the country from some great convulsion. The influence of the Sunday schools on public order and social progress, must be regarded from two points of view:—these institutions are most numerous and successful in the great towns which have been created on the great coal fields of Great Britain, since the invention of the steam engine. In such towns the labouring poor are employed during twelve or fourteen hours in the day, and the operations of the middle classes are, during the week, incessant until Sunday arrives; there are few or no opportunities for intercourse between the more wealthy and the working classes. The fact, that on the Sunday many thousands of the middle class devote three hours of their rest from the business of life to the pious object of instructing the children of the humble ranks, shows how powerfully the cohesive influence of Christian charity has been in operation between those elements of society among which repulsive forces abound. The indirect influence of the Sunday school has, therefore, been most favourable to social harmony and public order. Its direct influence is not less important. A large portion of the population chiefly owe the power to read, and whatever acquaintance they have with the Holy Scriptures, their connection with a religious congregation, and the influence of a religious example, to this school. It has also laid the foundation of public education for the poor deeply in the religious organization of the country. The type of this school has, to a great extent, predetermined the constitution of the daily school, and provided the fabric, which by a natural transition, may be employed in the establishment of an efficient system of elementary instruction;

tending, in harmony with the Sunday schools, to complete the work of Christian civilization which has been so auspiciously commenced."

So much apprehension was, however, felt, as to the effect of these Minutes on Sunday schools, that notice was given to the Committee, previously to the Annual Meeting of 1847, that a resolution (of which a copy was forwarded) would be moved upon the subject. Upon submitting the resolution to Mr. Charles Hindley, M.P., the Chairman, it appeared to be one which it was not necessary to oppose; because, although the Committee were not prepared to admit that the danger to Sunday schools lamented over, existed in anything like the degree anticipated, yet the course of action recommended was one to which no objection could be raised.

The Committee appointed at the meeting at which this resolution was adopted, upon their assembling, took it into consideration; and while they felt that it would be out of their province to interfere with proceedings merely connected with general education, yet if those proceedings were calculated to interrupt the successful working of the Sunday school system, their duty called upon them to use their influence to prevent the evil. They, therefore, referred the subject to a Sub-Committee, who communicated with the gentlemen who moved and seconded the resolutions, requesting them to point out in what way they thought the Minutes of Council would be injurious to Sunday schools; and were favoured in reply with a very full statement of their views. The result of the investigation of the Sub-Committee was embodied in a memorial presented to the Committee of Council on Education, and which contained the following statements:—

"It is apprehended, that from the unwillingness of some parties to accept aid from the Government, or the inability of places having a small population to support more than one school, there will, in many cases, be no other means of public daily education than that afforded by a school conducted by those who accept the assistance offered by the Government. That the Sunday school system has so greatly increased, and its

advantages are so highly estimated, that it is probable that such a school will be connected with every such day school. That, in many day schools, it is the practice to require the scholars to learn the catechisms and formularies of the church with which the schools are connected, and to attend the Sunday school and public worship on Sundays. That where, from the causes already stated, there is but one public daily school, to which the parents must, therefore, necessarily send their children for instruction, it will be a great grievance to them if religious catechisms and formularies are taught, and the attendance of the children should be required on Sundays, either at the Sunday school or at public worship, contrary to the inclinations of the parents. That the result of such a regulation will be to compel the parents either to sacrifice the advantage of daily education for the children, or to withdraw them from attendance at the Sunday school and public worship which they approve. That the intentions of the Government, in affording aid in the promotion of education, will thus be frustrated, and a violence committed against the religious liberties of the people. That your memorialists, therefore, respectfully urge that a condition be annexed to all grants made under the authority of your Lordships; that, in schools receiving such aid, the learning of religious catechisms and formularies, and attendance on Sundays at school or public worship, be not rendered compulsory on the scholars."

A deputation from the Committee were also favoured with an interview with the Marquis of Lansdowne, Lord President of the Council, attended by Mr. Kay Shuttleworth, the Secretary (now Sir J. P. Kay Shuttleworth, Bart.), when the statements of the memorial were urged upon the attention of his lordship, who was pleased to state that his own feelings, and he believed those of every member of the Council, were in harmony with the object sought for by the Committee of the Sunday School Union: that every effort had been made, short of direct interference to procure a rescinding of the rule of the National Society, by which the scholars were required to learn the Church Catechism, and to attend on Sundays; that those efforts had

been almost successful, but some circumstances occurred which caused them to fail, and the rule still continued ; but that, in his lordship's own neighbourhood, and in other parts, it was not enforced where it was found objectionable ; that the Committee of Council having acted for some years with the National Society, on the understanding that its regulations should be maintained, did not feel themselves at liberty to require the rescinding of the rule, and that any such interference might cause it to be enforced still more rigidly ; but that, if in any place it appeared that any parties were deprived of the means of education through the operation of such a regulation, the Committee would be ready to give assistance beyond their usual limit, in order to enable a school to be established and carried on for the benefit of such parties ; being anxious to encourage the formation of schools to be conducted on liberal principles.

The deputation explained to his lordship that the memorial was intended to apply to all bodies which might make the learning religious catechisms and attendance on Sundays a condition for receiving scholars into the daily school.

His lordship made several inquiries as to the constitution of the Sunday School Union, and the mode of conducting Sunday schools, which were answered ; and in reply to an inquiry as to whether there would be any objection to his statements to the deputation being made public, his lordship said they were at full liberty to make his views known in any manner they might think desirable.

The Union has not only been called upon to protect Sunday schools from injurious interference on the part of the legislature in its desire to extend the general education of the people, but has also had occasion to step forward to oppose plans, by which they were exposed to injury from the intrusion of worldly pleasure and worldly business, for the religious observance of the Lord's-day.

During the Sessions of Parliament for the year 1837, a Bill was brought into the House of Commons, for establishing a race-course at Notting Hill, on the western suburb of the metro-

polis; and for diverting a footpath which passed over the ground. The measure was strongly opposed by several persons in the neighbourhood, who thought that such an establishment in the immediate vicinity of the metropolis, would lead to many evils; but the Bill was passed by the House of Commons, on the promoters of it consenting to the introduction of a clause entitling the public to gratuitous admission on Sundays, and some other specified days. Those persons who were interested in the religious instruction of the young felt that they ought to make some effort to prevent the adoption, by the legislature, of a principle so fatal to the religious observance of the Lord's-day; and a petition to the House of Lords, against the passing of such a Bill was therefore prepared, and signed by about 6,600 Sunday School Teachers. The Committee cheerfully granted £10 towards the expenses incurred, and had the satisfaction of finding that the resistance to this injurious measure proved successful.

The Committee were not only called upon to protect the Lord's-day from the inroad of worldly pleasure, but also from the introduction of worldly business. At the close of the year, they learnt that it was in contemplation to make arrangements in the London Post Office for sorting and transmitting to the country on Sundays, the letters which arrive in London on the morning of that day. They found on inquiry that there were 650 bags of letters, which arrived at the Post Office on each of the six working days, which brought on an average 70,000 letters. On the Lord's-day, only fourteen bags arrived (twelve from seaport towns, and one each from Scotland and Ireland), bringing about 2,000 letters. Of these, 1,700 were for London, and 300 for the country. The business at present only required the attendance of one clerk at the office, with six or seven messengers, sorters, &c., to forward government letters, and to secure the others for a place of safety. This whole duty seldom occupies more than an hour and an half; but if the letters had to be transmitted, every road division (20 in number) in the Inland Office would be set to work, and in the whole, no less than 100 persons would be required to transmit the letters

which usually arrived. These, therefore, would form no criterion of the numbers which might then be expected ; as that limited number was caused by the knowledge which parties in the country had, that the letters, if received, would not be delivered or transmitted ; the number would speedily increase, so as to require the attendance of a large part of the Post Office force.

The Committee felt this matter to be of very serious importance. It was setting a bad example, which would be too readily followed ; and even if confined in the first instance to the transmission of letters to the country, it violated the principle of the religious observance of the day, and would lead on to a London delivery also, the immediate and indirect evils of which could not be estimated. Under these circumstances the Committee felt it their duty to prepare a memorial to the Lords of Her Majesty's Treasury, stating the evils which they apprehended, and praying that the cessation from business on the Lord's-day, which had hitherto existed in the London Post Office, might continue to be observed. This memorial was signed by about 6,200 Sunday School Teachers of London, and presented to their lordships. The Committee did not find that any intention existed to obtain a public and united manifestation of Christian feeling on this subject ; and believing such a measure to be important, they convened a public meeting at Exeter Hall on December 26th, at which Sir C. E. Smith, Bart., presided, trusting that it might be the means of preventing the dreaded evil, and that, at all events, it would be useful in calling the attention of Christians to a subject which was becoming increasingly important, namely : The due observance of the Lord's-day. Much difference of opinion exists as to the propriety of enforcing the outward observance of that day by any legislative enactment ; but no such difference will be found among Sunday-School Teachers as to the desirableness of using all moral means of promoting its religious observance. The resolutions of the public meeting were communicated to the Right Honourable Lord Viscount Melbourne, the First Lord of the Treasury ; and subsequently Sir C. E. Smith, and two of the

Secretaries, in company with a deputation from various bodies, who had presented memorials, had an interview with his Lordship and the Chancellor of the Exchequer, upon the subject. The result of these continued efforts, was, that the proposed measures were not then adopted.

The design, however, was not abandoned, and on Friday morning, September 28th, 1848, the public journals contained an official announcement, that on and after the 14th October, letters posted in provincial post offices, on the blank post day (or Saturday), for towns beyond London, should, if stamped and paying full letter rates, be forwarded so as to be delivered, except in remote places, on the Monday morning. This was accompanied by orders issued within the walls of the post office, rendered necessary by this regulation, and which created no small anxiety and alarm among the officials of the Inland department, and especially those who loved the day and house of God. One of these orders was as follows :—"On and after the 14th of next month, you will be required to attend twice on that day, the same as on the other days of the week." The Committee presented a memorial to the Lords Commissicners of her Majesty's Treasury, praying that the cessation of business which had hitherto existed in the London Post Office, on the Lord's-day, might continue to be observed. They also convened a meeting at Exeter Hall, on Monday, October 8th, at which Mr. Alderman Challis presided, and on his being compelled to leave, Sir John Heron Maxwell, Bart., occupied the chair. Resolutions were adopted, deprecating the proposed measures. The ground taken, was, that such a proceeding would be a violation of the Divine law ; would deprive many persons of their only day of religion and rest ; would withdraw many others from works of mercy for purposes of secular employment and commercial convenience ; and that such alterations would prove (it was to be feared) only a first step to the opening of the post office for general purposes, as on other days. It being afterwards urged that the relief sought only applied to the metropolis, the Committee presented a further memorial, praying for the total cessation of Sunday postal labour throughout the country, and

they recommended to teachers generally, the adoption of a similar memorial. It afforded the Committee much pleasure to find that a growing conviction, that Sunday postal labour could be abolished through the country, led the House of Commons to adopt an address to Her Majesty to that effect, which was complied with by the Government. No adequate arrangements were, however, made to obviate the inconveniences which must have been expected to accompany so extensive an alteration; every complaint against the closing of the country post offices was welcomed, and Her Majesty's ministers made no secret of their disinclination to the measure. The natural result was, that the Sunday postal labour was resumed, and is still continued, although with some material alterations. The Committee in reporting this to the ensuing Annual Meeting, expressed their deep conviction, that the continuance of such labour cannot be justified; that the freedom from the delivery and collection of letters, which London has so long enjoyed, has been a great blessing; that if such a freedom is not found to produce any real inconvenience in the metropolis, all such as was temporally felt in the country would have speedily disappeared; and that the transmission of country letters through London on the Lord's-day, will, if not most carefully watched, lead on to the delivery and collection of letters in the metropolis. While, however, it is to be regretted that the efforts made, have been but partially successful, to a great extent the remedy is in the hands of Christian men; let those in London refrain from posting letters by the Saturday night mails; let those in the country decline receiving letters on Sunday mornings, or posting them on Sunday evenings; and that result will be obtained by moral influence, which legislative interference has failed to procure.

During the year 1852, the Committee were called upon to resist an attempt to increase the temptations, already too numerous, to employ the Lord's-day for purposes of amusement. For many years past, desires had been expressed that the British Museum and National Gallery might be opened on the Sabbath. The removal to Sydenham of the building erected

in Hyde Park, for the exhibition of the industry of all nations, and its reconstruction on an enlarged plan, brought this subject again before the public. The Directors of the Company applied to the Government, presided over by Lord Derby, for a charter, sanctioning, among other things, the opening of this new building on the Lord's-day. This permission the Government agreed to grant on certain terms. It appeared to the Committee that the course thus adopted was objectionable. The Government were not merely abstaining from interfering to preserve the sanctity of the Lord's-day, with all its blessings, but they were actually sanctioning a measure which would, in all probability, lead to a more extensive desecration of the day than had ever before occurred. This was proposed to be done, with all the pleasing recollections attending that public acknowledgment of our duty in this respect, which was testified in the face of the whole world, by a closing of the great exhibition on that day. And it was done in full view of the example which would thus be set with respect to other public establishments, the closing of which, on the Lord's-day, it would be difficult afterwards to justify on any intelligible principle. The Committee, therefore, resolved to present a memorial to the Government, stating their objections to the course about to be adopted. Before the memorial was presented, however, it was discovered that there was a law in existence, rendering unlawful the taking money for admission to places of public resort on the Lord's-day, and a clause was inserted in the charter granted, prohibiting the opening of the building on that day, until the sanction of the Legislature was obtained. An effort was then made to obtain public support to a movement having in view the removal of this restriction, and although the parties stimulating the effort did not appear, it was evident that neither money nor exertion would be wanting to render it successful. The Committee did not feel at liberty to remain inactive while the minds of the working classes were thus sought to be imbued with the idea that those were their best friends who desired to throw down the safeguards, at present existing, around the Lord's-day, and to convert it from a day of

sacred rest, into one of worldly enjoyment, and ultimately of worldly care and labour. They therefore prepared a form of petition to both Houses of Parliament from teachers, parents, and friends, and those who had been scholars in each district ; and also adopted means for obtaining the support of members of Parliament, representing the respective districts. In order that the signatures of these petitions might be affixed intelligently, the Committee recommended that meetings of the parents and friends of Sunday scholars should be held, and the subject, with all its bearings upon their temporal, as well as spiritual interests, fully laid before them. At the request of the Committee, the Rev. Dr. Campbell wrote an address to teachers, which was inserted in the Union Magazine, and afterwards printed separately for distribution. A similar address to senior scholars was written by Rev. C. H. Bateman, and inserted in the Bible Class Magazine. This address was also reprinted as a tract. These and other efforts succeeded in averting the evil.

In closing this record of the efforts made by the Union to preserve the Schools from all that might injure their efficiency, it may be right to refer to one legislative measure, by which increased facilities are given for correspondence between teachers and their present or former scholars.

In the year 1839, an uniform penny postage was adopted by the Government. One* of the Secretaries had in a previous year given evidence before a Committee of the House of Commons appointed to consider the plan suggested by Mr. Rowland Hill. In a communication made to the Committee by the Westbury Union, it was shown how this change might be made subservient to the interests of a large class of Sunday scholars. "At the last meeting of our Union, it was strongly recommended to adopt an epistolary correspondence between the teachers and their scholars when they are separated from each other. Much good may be anticipated. It would prove beneficial to both parties, and cement a bond of union which otherwise must, in many cases, be broken by the arrangements of Providence.

* Mr. Watson.

The new Post Office arrangements are admirably adapted to carry out this plan. One penny for a letter to or from one we feel an interest in, though at a distance of a hundred miles, is speaking loudly, and saying in this department, 'Occupy, till I come.'"

In the year 1855, the Committee were again compelled to buckle on their armour in defence of the religious observance of the Lord's-day. The executive government of the country had not yet been brought to feel that this question is one which lies beyond the boundary of mere political expediency. Not contented with the freedom which the inhabitants of London enjoyed as to the mode of spending the Lord's-day, the Government have presented inducements to them to employ its sacred hours in mere recreation, imposing, of course, on very many persons, severe labour. Thus the Palace at Hampton Court was thrown open; the Botanical gardens at Kew were first opened in the afternoon, and then during the whole of the Lord's-day; and a regimental band stationed in Kensington Gardens, to entertain the pleasure-seekers in that direction. By these acts, official sanction was given to the gradually increasing feeling, that it was for man to determine in what way it pleased him that the day should be spent. Its sanctity was disowned, and the progress to continental habits was rapid. It was soon found that there were other places of recreation which might be made available; and there seemed no principle on which the British Museum, the National Gallery, and the Crystal Palace could be closed against those who desired to enter them. Notice was accordingly given of a motion in the House of Commons for an address to the Crown, requesting the opening of the two former of these places, and which, if successful, would have been soon followed by a repeal of the restriction in admission to the Crystal Palace.

The Committee felt that these measures would exert so injurious an influence on Sunday schools, as to render it their imperative duty to endeavour to prevent their being carried out. They issued an address to parents and teachers, prepared at their request by the Rev. S. G. Green. They recommended the calling meetings

of the parents of Sunday scholars, to explain the tendency of these proposals, as well as the presentations of petitions to the House of Commons against them. A petition was also presented to the same effect from the Committee themselves. In addition to those mere private efforts, a public meeting of the teachers of London was convened in Exeter Hall, on February 18th, which was numerously attended, hundreds being unable to obtain admission. The Right Hon. the Earl of Shaftesbury presided, and the meeting was addressed by his Lordship, Mr. Thomas Chambers, M.P., the Hon. and Rev. B. W. Noel, Mr. Edward Ball, M.P., the Rev. W. W. Robinson, Incumbent of Christchurch, Chelsea, Rev. Andrew Reed, Mr. Bryan, a working potter, Rev. Thomas Archer, D.D., Rev. H. J. Betts, and Joseph Payne, Esq. The subject was laid before the assembled teachers in a calm, enlightened, and Christian spirit; and the addresses delivered were welcomed with an intelligent, yet enthusiastic reception. Petitions, founded on the resolutions adopted, were presented to both Houses of Parliament, and the Committee were entrusted with other petitions for the same purpose from various parts of the country. These latter petitions were signed by 9,874 teachers, 4,074 members of congregations, and 3,504 parents. The total number of petitions presented up to April 3rd, amounted to 4,880, with 603,320 signatures.

On February 21, Sir Joshua Walmsley submitted to the House of Commons his motion, designed to express an opinion that it would promote the moral and intellectual improvement of the working classes in London, if the British Museum and National Gallery were open on Sunday afternoon. When the motion was brought to a division, there were 50 voted for it, and 378 against it, showing the large majority of 328.

Even this decided expression of opinion did not put an end to these attempts to convert the Lord's-day into one of worldly pleasure. In the following year, one of the ministers of the crown was so inattentive to the wishes of the people, as thus expressed by their representatives, as well as regardless of the true character and object of the Lord's-day, as to direct the attendance of regimental bands in Regent's and Victoria Parks,

and the fitting up of refreshment booths for the accommodation of the visitors. The outrage thus committed on the religious feelings of the nation, however, brought forward such a manifestation of disgust, as induced the Prime Minister to interfere, and direct that these proceedings should be discontinued. The Committee thought it their duty to adopt, and transmit to Lord Palmerston, resolutions embodying their sentiments on these measures, combined with thanks to him for his seasonable interference.

CHAPTER X.

EXTENDED EFFORTS OF THE UNION IN FURTHERANCE
OF ITS OBJECTS.

CONTENTS:—Union not formed to collect Funds—Schools Abroad—The Sunday School Society and Grants—The Island of Antigua and its Liberated Slaves—Greece—Aid to Schools in the West Indies—Library and Reading Rooms—Depository removed to 60, Paternoster Row—Proceedings in opening—Lectures to Teachers—Mr. Edward Thomas—Lectures at Falcon Square Chapel—Subscription to Library Reduced—Additional Books—Removal to Jubilee Memorial Building—Sunday School Teachers' Training Class—Scripture Museum—Lending Libraries in Schools—Conference of Evangelical Christians of all Denominations at Geneva, 1861—Sunday School Convention, 1862—Continental Sunday Schools aided by Union.

THE narrative contained in the preceding chapters has brought out a distinguishing feature of the Sunday School Union, from most, if not all, the other religious institutions with which our land is blessed. It was not established to collect funds by means of which Christian labourers might be employed, but it was an association of such workers themselves, for their mutual improvement, and to stir up the zeal and direct the energy of those who had not yet engaged in the gratuitous instruction of the young on the Lord's-day. Not only did the Union refrain from seeking contributions, but when, in the year 1818, the Essex Union sent a donation of £2 2s., it was returned on the ground that such assistance was not required. The openings for usefulness which have since enabled the Committee to promote the extension of Sunday schools, in this and other countries, had not been then presented to their notice.

The Committee had, however, received applications for assistance towards the carrying on of schools established in the West India islands. At St. George's, Bermuda, a school had been established, containing eighty children, mostly blacks; at St.

John's, Antigua, two schools, one containing 100, and the other 650 scholars. The Committee made grants of books to these schools, but finding their means inadequate to meet the demands which would thus come upon the funds, they induced the Sunday School Society to extend assistance to the colonies of this kingdom. As, however, the rules of that institution confined their grants to copies of the Scriptures and reading and spelling books, the Committee of the Union found ample room for their liberality, which they have freely exercised. It is impossible to recall the early efforts made by the Moravian Brethren and the Methodists, for the religious instruction of the young in the island of Antigua, without rejoicing at the testimony afforded to its value. When, by the emancipation act, slavery was exchanged for apprenticeship, the planters of Antigua were so well satisfied with their generally educated slaves, that they declared their willingness to set them wholly free; and the system of apprenticeship was never introduced into that island.

As, however, the publications of the Union increased in number, a small profit began to be realised from them, when an independent depository was established, and the sale of other approved works, suitable for scholars and teachers, was undertaken, a commission was received from the publishers; and gradually contributions were received from the friends to the religious education of the young on the Lord's-day, and thus funds were placed at the disposal of the Committee.

At the General Meeting in May, 1825, great interest was excited in reference to the establishment of Sunday Schools in Greece, whose inhabitants were then asserting their independence of the Turkish empire. A resolution, moved by Rev. J. Bennett, seconded by the Rev. Sereno Dwight, of Boston, North America, and supported by the Rev. Thomas Mortimer, was adopted, in compliance with which the Committee agreed to encourage the preparation, in modern Greek, of a summary of the History of the Sunday Schools, and a Sunday School Hymn Book. To the former work they appropriated £50, and to the latter, £20. Efforts were also being made to obtain additional

funds; and a correspondence was opened with various parties, who, it was thought, would feel interested in this effort to extend religious instruction; but no considerable result attended the exertions thus made. A few Sunday schools were conducted in the island of Corfu, under the zealous superintendence of the Rev. J. Lowndes, but the attempt to introduce them on the continent of Greece was not attended with success.

As the first pecuniary assistance granted by the Union was to aid schools in the West Indies, so the schools there, and especially in the island of Jamaica, have continued during successive years to be large recipients, especially of the publications of the Union. Nor has the assistance been withheld from other colonies, while missionaries throughout the world have never appealed for help in vain. The expenditure thus occasioned has been larger, but its results have been beneficial.

There is one means by which the Union has sought to carry out its object of encouraging and assisting teachers in their work, which has involved a very considerable expenditure, and deserves therefore distinct notice as part of the benevolent operations of the Union.

When the Depository was removed from No. 19, to No. 5, Paternoster Row, the attention of the Committee was directed to a plan for establishing there a Library and Reading-room for Sunday School teachers, to the advantages of which, also, all members of Sunday School Unions should be admitted. The subscription was fixed at 5s. per annum, but it was agreed that clergymen and ministers having Sunday schools in connection with their congregations, and Sunday school teachers, or friends of Sunday schools occasionally visiting London, should have free admission on being introduced by a member of the general Committee. The sum of £150 was devoted to the purchasing of books, and the room was opened for the use of the subscribers on July 1, 1833. The expediency of allowing part of the books to constitute a Circulating Library was considered, but not then decided upon.

The lease of the Society's premises having expired, and there-

being much occasion for additional accommodation for the business and other purposes of the Union, it was thought desirable to take a lease of the premises of No. 60, Paternoster Row, and to re-build them in a form better adapted for the objects in view. The expense of this building was entirely defrayed from the trade funds of the Union. It was opened on Wednesday, May 9th, 1835, when the Committee and a few other friends met together for the purpose of imploring the Divine blessing on the undertaking. The Treasurer presided, and the devotional exercises were conducted by Messrs. Challis, Jones, Lloyd, and Thomas. In entering upon these more extensive premises, it was thought practicable to increase the usefulness of the Library and Reading-room by the occasional delivery of lectures on subjects adapted to assist teachers. The opening Lecture was delivered on Wednesday, July 8th, by the Rev. Samuel Green, on "The Design of Revelation." This was followed by many others during successive years; the particulars of which it might be tedious to record, but from which the subscribers to the Library and their friends derived much instruction. It may probably not be considered unsuitable to advert distinctly to a course of lectures delivered gratuitously in the year 1837, by the late Rev. Dr. J. Pye Smith, on "The General Principles of Geology in relation to Mineral substances, and to the Fossil remains of Vegetable and Animal Nature," which excited intense interest, and into which he freely poured the stores he had accumulated on this favourite subject of his studies. The increased accommodation afforded for the Library also enabled the Committee to extend its advantages, under certain necessary regulations to senior scholars.

The mention of Mr. Edward Thomas, as having taken part in the opening services of the new Depository, affords a suitable opportunity for recording some particulars of one who was amongst the early members of the Union, and continued to labour in its behalf for more than 36 years, until his death, 29th July, 1848. He was born on the 23rd of May, 1778, at Wem Weston, near Oswestry. He was early the subject of vicissitude, having been deprived, by death, of a father's care, at the

age of four years. At the usual period, he was apprenticed to learn the business of a tailor, but the decease of his master, during the term of his apprenticeship, caused him to leave his native village to seek employment at Manchester before he had attained his twentieth year. He often referred to this period in terms showing the warmth of his attachment to his widowed mother, how he turned again and again, ere he could leave, to look at the cottage in which she dwelt, till he was compelled to sit down and give vent to his emotion in a flood of tears ; and in his intercourse with the young, to the end of his days, few subjects were so prominent in his discourse as the duty of love to parents. At Manchester he was exposed to much temptation from ungodly fellow-workmen ; but, happily, he had a pious master, who induced him to attend the ministry of Dr. Bailey, at St. James's Church. Under the preaching of that excellent man, his mind was impressed with the importance of eternal things, and he became the subject of that mighty change which is emphatically described in Scripture, as being "born again." From that period he became a frequent attendant at the social prayer meetings, and was soon encouraged to assist in conducting their exercises.

About the year 1804, Mr. Thomas left Manchester for the metropolis, and was recommended by Dr. Bailey to attend the ministry of the Rev. Samuel Crowther, of Christ Church, Newgate Street. He was soon found at the social prayer meetings, then held in connection with that congregation, and was invited to join a society for the visitation of the sick poor. In the year 1807, Mr. Thomas became a teacher in the Silver Street Sunday Schools, and subsequently joined the congregation worshipping at Silver Street Chapel, of which the Rev. E. J. Jones was then minister. For eleven years he laboured assiduously in a class of boys, and during that period often mourned over the waywardness of his scholars, and his apparent want of success ; but in after years his journal records, with grateful feeling, that many of these youths had given the satisfactory evidence of piety, had become Sunday school teachers ; members of various Christian societies, honoured, and

esteemed in their position in life, and useful in the church and in the world. From the time of his becoming a teacher, he took a lively interest in all the meetings, whether for business or devotion, held in connection with the school; and nothing less than imperative engagements ever prevented his being present. In the year 1818, Mr. J. D. Pearson, the superintendent of the girls' school at Silver Street, was appointed to the care of the schools at Chinsurah, then under the patronage of the Marquis of Hastings, Governor General of India. Mr. Thomas was selected to fill the vacant post, and commenced his work with many prayers. It was his custom to enter in a journal from week to week notices of anything which he deemed worthy of remark in the proceedings of the school, and of his visits to the sick children at their homes. This journal he continued with occasional interruptions from temporary loss of sight, from cataract, until nearly the close of life. His anxieties for the scholars did not cease on their leaving the school. At his suggestion, an Annual Meeting on Easter Monday of former scholars was commenced in the year 1827, and there, with intense interest on each returning year, he poured forth his prayers, his counsels, his congratulations, his hopes, and his fears. At the meeting in 1848, when upwards of 300 attended, his infirmities prevented his personally taking part in the proceedings; but he could not refrain from making known to them in writing the deep interest he felt in their welfare. Mr. Thomas was eminently Catholic in his religious sentiments. The principles of the Union were precisely those which ever met his cordial sympathies. It has been already mentioned, that he was one of a Sub-Committee, to whom, in April, 1812, the prospectus of the proposed "Teachers' Magazine" was submitted for examination. His parlour was not unfrequently the Committee-room of the Union in its infancy, and there the first public meeting, held in the year 1812, was determined on.

He had been laid aside during the early part of the closing year of his existence on earth; and while viewing death as apparently near at hand, although he had no rapture, encountered no gloom or despondency. His hopes were firm; he knew in

whom he had believed, and expressed himself quite willing to go, or to remain, as best pleased his Heavenly Father. He was sufficiently recovered in the months of June and July to revisit the school in which he loved to be found ; and on Sunday, the 23rd of July, conducted the closing exercises, addressing the scholars with more than his usual earnestness, vigour, and effect ; but on the following Tuesday an attack of speradic cholera came on, which acting on a frame reduced and weakened by the previous winter's confinement, closed his earthly career on the morning of the 29th of July, when without a struggle, his spirit returned to God who gave it.*

The use made of the Library and Reading-room did not meet the desires of the Committee, who felt an anxious wish that more of their fellow teachers might share in its advantages. With this view, several members of the Committee, in the year 1839, consented to deliver familiar lectures on alternate Wednesday evenings. Conversations on the subject of each lecture were conducted on the Wednesday evening succeeding, and the measure was attended with gratifying results. The lectures were often delivered to crowded auditories, and the meetings for conversation were generally well attended. Some of these lectures, as well as of previous ones delivered at the request of the Committee, were afterwards published, and still form part of the publications of the Union. The instructions addressed in the first instance to the members of the library, have thus been rendered accessible to Sunday school teachers generally. The titles of the lectures so published are, "The Policy and History of the Hebrews," by the Rev. J. Hoppus, D.D. ; "Hints on Self-Education," by Mr. Daniel Benham ; "Self-Culture in its Relation to the Sunday School Teacher," by Mr. John Mann ; and "Senior Classes, their Importance, and the Mode of Conducting Them," by Mr. W. H. Watson. This last has been reprinted in America, by The New York Episcopal Methodist Sunday School Union. Two classes for the study and practice of vocal sacred music, one for male teachers and the other for females, were also established. The Committee were greatly encouraged to proceed with this branch of their operations by

* Union Magazine, 1848, p. 273.

finding that not only were the present members of the Library deriving great advantage from the opportunities afforded them of perusing the writings of the best authors in Biblical literature, but that some of their old subscribers were now prosecuting their studies elsewhere, with a view to entering upon the Christian Ministry.

In the winter of the year 1845, a monthly course of lectures was delivered at Falcon Square Chapel, by Ministers who kindly consented, at the request of the Committee, to take a share in this labour. The lectures were numerous attended, and were carried on for several successive seasons with great benefit to the teachers who were present.

In the year 1850, the Committee found that although the subscription to the Library and Reading-room was only five shillings a year, the number of subscribers did not exceed 130, and they thought that a part of their funds might be beneficially employed in enlarging the Circulating Library, and throwing it open with the Reading room, and the use of the Reference Library to all teachers, male and female, who were members of the Union, and to senior scholars recommended by their superintendent, at a nominal subscription of one shilling per annum, and to other teachers at a subscription of 5s. per annum. The Circulating Library was increased to 1,611 volumes; the Reading-room was kept open from three in the afternoon until ten in the evening, and 1,089 teachers became subscribers. The Committee have had no reason to regret their having offered to female teachers the opportunity of studying the Biblical works contained in the Reference Library, as well as of perusing the periodical works which lie on the tables of the Reading-room. The library was subsequently increased to about 3,000 volumes, and the average number of subscribers settled down to about 700, most of whom showed by their constant use of the advantages offered, their estimate of its value.

The erection of the Jubilee Memorial Building in 1856, enabled the Committee to extend the advantages of the Reading-room and Library. A considerable addition of books was made; and a separate Reading-room provided for the use of ladies.

The delivery of lectures became more frequent; the weekly Preparation Class, which had been commenced, was continued, but ultimately absorbed in a Training Class, with more extended objects; and a Singing Class was formed. The collection of a Scriptural Museum has also been commenced, and an Association of Superintendents and Secretaries has been formed under the sanction of the Committee. The Library now comprises, in the Reference Department, 895 volumes, and 3,970 volumes for circulation. The number of subscribers, although not so large as could be desired, averages above 1,000.

The object, however, which has absorbed the largest portion of the benevolent funds of the Union, has been the formation and maintenance in efficiency, in connection with every school, of an adequate and well selected lending library. Reference has already been made to the returns on the subject of education, obtained through the medium of the parish officers, in the year 1833. There was one fact brought out by these returns, to which the Committee thought it necessary to direct the attention of the Annual Meeting: that out of the 55,799 daily and Sunday schools reported, only 2,464 had circulating libraries attached to them. In addition to thus arousing the anxiety of their fellow-teachers, the Committee themselves took the matter into consideration, and determined to devote £300 to grants for lending libraries for Sunday schools at very reduced prices. They also applied to the Religious Tract Society, who kindly and liberally offered to supply them works to the extent of £300 at the same reduced prices. The Committee also procured copies of numerous works which appeared likely to be suitable for these libraries, and carefully perused them. Out of the works so examined a considerable number was rejected as unsuitable; and ultimately a catalogue was formed, consisting of 353 volumes. The books were supplied at about one-third the retail prices, and the advantage thus held out was readily embraced. In one village in the North of England, the teachers went from house to house to collect the sum required to be paid; and in one school near London, the children themselves contributed nearly the whole amount. Thus commenced a very im-

portant branch of the benevolent operations of the Union, by which Sunday schools generally have been much benefited. The list of approved books has increased to 1,179 volumes, and had nothing more been done than to examine the works professedly designed for the young, and thus form a list to which teachers might resort with confidence, the great labour undertaken by the Committee in this investigation would not have been spent in vain. The title, the author, the publisher, or the external appearance, cannot be relied on, and as teachers cannot in all cases be intimately acquainted with the works they are about to purchase, it becomes greatly important to them that there should be accessible to them a list of works which have been carefully examined, and which may be put into the hands of the young without anxiety. But the advantage to teachers has not rested here; they have been permitted to purchase the many thousand volumes contained in the 7,879 libraries so granted, and the retail prices of which would have amounted to £43,140 19s. 10d., for about one-third of that sum.

In the first instance the grants were restricted to the formation of new libraries; but the Committee feel so strongly the importance of this indirect means of benefiting not only the scholars, but their families, by placing in each home a suitable book for reading in leisure hours, and the necessity in order to its success of keeping up the library in its efficiency, that they gradually consented to make grants for adding to libraries already existing. At length the demands made upon the funds of the Union, became, as will be perceived, so overwhelming, that the Committee were compelled to limit themselves to assisting in the formation of new libraries.

There is yet remaining to be mentioned one other branch of the benevolent operations of the Union, which appears likely to assume rather considerable dimensions. The Union had, on many occasions, assisted in the formation and carrying on of schools in various parts of the Continent; but these were isolated cases.

In the year 1861, the Fourth Conference of Evangelical Christians of all Nations was held at Geneva. As it was announced that Sunday schools would form one of the subjects

to be considered by that very important Assembly, the Committee felt it to be their duty to instruct one of their Secretaries* to represent the Union. In the order of proceedings it was arranged that he should read a paper on English Sunday schools, and he was requested by the Committee to ascertain the views of the foreign brethren, as to the expediency of holding in London, in the following year, as had been suggested at a Conference in Yorkshire, a general Sunday School Convention, in connection with the International Exhibition, which was then to take place. The larger meetings at Geneva were held in the Cathedral, while those which it was expected would not be so numerously attended took place in smaller buildings. It was arranged that the subject of Sunday Schools should be considered at one of these smaller assemblies; but, as the time approached, it was found that so much interest was excited that it was necessary that the meeting should be held in the Cathedral, which was as well filled as on any of the previous occasions. The Earl Roden, who had for many years held the office of President of the Union, was present. The pastor Cook, of Calais, read the introductory paper, in which he narrated the origin and progress of Sunday schools in England and America. He mentioned the assistance rendered by the Union to Mr. Martin, of Bordeaux, in forming the first Sunday school in France, and what had been the results; and he gave many particulars as to the publications of the Union, and the extent of their circulation. The other speakers were Professor Nagel, of Neuchâtel; the pastor Montauden, of the Paris Sunday School Society; the pastor de Faye, of Lyons; the minister of Geneva, and the representative of the Union.

As the representative of the Union had failed in all his private attempts to obtain an answer to the inquiry he was instructed to make on behalf of the Committee, he was compelled to avail himself of this public occasion to bring the subject forward. A meeting was immediately arranged, and announced for the following Monday morning, at which the subject was discussed, and a unanimous expression of opinion

* Mr. Watson.

given that such a Convention as that proposed by the Committee would be very desirable.

The Hon. A. F. Kinnaird, M.P., the President of the Union, took part in the proceedings of this meeting, the object of which was warmly urged by the Rev. Professor Nagel, of Neuchâtel, who had under his care a Sunday school of from 700 to 800 scholars. He said, with considerable earnestness, that he should devote the winter to the learning the English language, in order that he might be prepared to take part in the proceedings of the Convention—a pledge which he fully redeemed.

On the result of the Conference at Geneva being made known to the Committee, arrangements were made for the assembling the Convention, which commenced its Sessions on Monday evening, Sept. 1st, 1862. On the previous day a large number of the ministers of London made the Sunday school cause the theme of their sermons; in the afternoon, upwards of 65,000 scholars were gathered together, in about 60 chapels, to join in worship, and listen to the addresses of the ministers and friends appointed to that service; and, in the evening, at least 40 prayer meetings were held, at which thousands of the teachers of London assembled, to unite in supplication at the throne of grace, that the Divine blessing might rest on the meetings of the Convention, and on the Sunday school cause at large.

The meetings of the Convention were attended by 433 persons—of whom 48 were officers, or members of the Committee; 19 Chairmen, or others taking part in the proceedings of the Convention; 13 were Foreign Delegates; 193 were Delegates from the country; 85 were London Delegates; 38 Ministers, and 37 Visitors, and they were held in the Jubilee Memorial Building, the hall of which had a gallery erected to afford the necessary accommodation.

The introductory meeting on Monday evening was presided over by James Abbiss, Esq., Alderman, when Mr. Watson, one of the Secretaries of the Union, read a paper on the "History and Influence of Sunday Schools in England." The Rev. Dr.

Urwick, of Dublin, read a similar paper in reference to Ireland; the Rev. J. Inglis, one as to Sunday schools in Scotland; and a fourth, on the Sunday Schools in Wales, was read by Mr. Hugh Owen at a subsequent meeting.

On Tuesday morning, after an hour spent in devotional exercises, over which the Rev. W. Howieson presided, the Convention resumed its sittings, under the presidency of Mr. Alderman Abbiss, who was succeeded by Major-General Alexander, and Mr. Charles Reed read a paper on "The great Object of Sunday School Teaching," which formed the subject of the morning Conference.

Mr. Henry Lee, of Salford, took the chair in the afternoon, when Mr. R. N. Collins read a paper on "Sunday School Classification," which also became a topic for discussion.

The Right Hon. the Lord Mayor had kindly placed the splendid Egyptian Hall of the Mansion House at the disposal of the Committee, who were thus enabled to issue twelve hundred tickets of admission to a meeting which was held on Tuesday evening, to hear addresses upon the state and prospects of Sunday schools abroad. Mr. Alderman Abbiss presided, and the following foreign delegates took part in the proceedings:—The Rev. J. H. Vincent, of Illinois, representing the Methodist Episcopal Sunday School Union of America; Mr. W. C. Chapin, of Massachusetts, U.S.; Rev. H. Paumier, B.D., pastor of the French Reformed Church, and Secretary to the Paris Sunday School Society; Rev. J. P. Cook, B.A., of Calais; Rev. Professor Nagel, of Neuchâtel; Rev. B. Malan, Moderator of the Waldensian Church; Rev. W. Cuthbertson, of Australia; and the Rev. W. Rycroft, of the Bahama Islands.

The place in which this assembly was held, the select character of the numerous auditory, the various nationalities represented by the speakers, and the appropriateness and excellence of the addresses, combined to justify the eulogium which was passed upon it by one American gentleman present, that it was the most perfect public meeting he had ever attended.

The prayer meeting and Conference on Wednesday morning

were presided over by the Rev. Samuel Martin, of Westminster. The subject for discussion was, "The Qualifications of an efficient Sunday School Teacher," introduced by a paper read by the Rev. James Inglis.

At the afternoon meeting, Henry Manton, Esq., Mayor of Birmingham, presided. The subject of the paper read by Mr. J. G. Fitch, M.A., Principal of the Normal School, Borough Road, was, "The Training of Sunday School Teachers for their Work."

The evening of this day was devoted to three specimen lessons, upon the subject appointed for the following Sunday in the Union List of Lessons. The Rev. C. R. Alford, M.A., Principal of the Highbury Training College, now Bishop of Hong Kong, occupied the chair; and the Infant Class was conducted by Mr. W. H. Groser, F.G.S., the Elementary Class by Miss Langley, and the Scripture Class by Mr. Drew.

The Prayer Meeting on Thursday morning was presided over by the Rev. B. Field, of the City Road Chapel, and the conference which succeeded, by Mr. Samuel Morley. The Rev. G. Allen, A.K.C., Incumbent of St. Thomas, Islington, read a paper upon "Sunday School Extension in the Upper Classes of Society," and Mr. F. Cuthbertson, of the Sunday School and Ragged School Unions, on "Sunday School Extension in the Lower Classes of Society." There being thus two papers read, the discussion upon them was necessarily brief, and part of the morning was employed in the reception of a deputation from the "International Temperance and Prohibition Convention," consisting of the following gentlemen:—Baron de Linden, Chamberlain of the King of Holland; the Hon. Judge Marshall, Ex-chief Justice of Nova Scotia; the Rev. Canon Jenkins, of Dowlais; the Rev. Charles Garrett, of Preston; Mr. Edward Whitwell, of Kendal; Mr. Joseph Thorpe, of Halifax; and the Rev. Professor Kirk, of Edinburgh. Their object was to present a memorial, urging teachers by example and precept, to promote the disuse of intoxicating liquors. The memorial was received and ordered to be entered on the minutes of the Convention.

At the afternoon meeting, the chair was taken by Thomas

Chambers, Esq., Q.C., Common Serjeant of the City of London, when the closing paper was read by Mr. J. A. Cooper, of Birmingham, on "The Internal Arrangements and Collateral Agencies of the Sunday schools." The discussion on this paper may be considered to have terminated the business of the Convention, but it was thought right to allow the teachers, generally, to share in the pleasing union with the representatives from foreign countries. A public meeting was therefore held in the evening of this day, over which the Right Honourable the Earl of Shaftesbury, was to have presided. His Lordship having been compelled through illness to leave London for the Continent, his place was supplied by Charles Gilpin, Esq., M.P., and the meeting was addressed by the Rev. W. Cuthbertson, of Sydney; Mr. Albert Woodruff, of Brooklyn, New York, representing the American Sunday School Union; Rev. Professor Nagel, of Neuchâtel; Rev. C. W. Bolton, of New York; representing the New York Sunday School Union; Rev. B. Malan, Moderator of the Waldensian Church; Rev. Dr. McClintock, of Paris, representing the Methodist Episcopal Sunday School Union of America; Rev. J. P. Cook, of Calais; and the Rev. B. Field, of the City Road Chapel.

At this meeting, the Rev. Professor Nagel narrated the following very interesting incident: "I had in my Sunday school a little girl of eleven years. I never took more care of her than of others, and never expected more from her than from her fellow-scholars. She attended my school for about two years, when she was obliged to leave our town, and to go home into the country. In her village was no Sunday school, and she felt the want deeply. What was to be done? She said to herself, 'If there is no Sunday school here, I must open one.' No sooner said than done. She went to some little girls in the village, and told them what we did in our Sunday school; and then she asked, 'Will you not come to me next Sunday? and we will pray together, and sing beautiful hymns, and read the Bible, just as we did at Neuchâtel in the Sunday school.' They said, 'We will come.' And they came,—the first time five or six, then ten or twelve, then twenty or more; and the old girls of

the village came also to the little girl, and asked permission to come also ; and at length our dear little girl of eleven years saw around her, every Sunday, a school of about forty children, from six to fifteen years of age. She prayed with them ; taught them some of our hymns ; she read the Bible as we do ; and explained it as well as she could. Her mother, who sometimes listened from behind the door, said, 'I never could hear her from the next room without shedding tears.' Christmas eve came for this village as for the whole earth. Now you must know that Christmas eve is, for our Sunday school at Neuchâtel, a very great treat. We assemble in our best clothes ; our chapel, always nice, is ornamented with beautiful garlands ; the illumination of gaslight is splendid ; every heart is dancing for joy, and every eye shines as a brilliant star. We sing, we pray, we kneel in spirit around the little one in the manger of Bethlehem, and we realize a great gathering of angels around us and present in our midst, watching, singing, praying, and adoring with us. In short, we are, during this favoured hour, the happiest people in the world. After we have rejoiced and adored with the angels the invisible but present Child of Bethlehem, in order to make our treat as complete as possible, every scholar and every teacher receives from the hand of the superintendent a little book, written expressly for this occasion, and destined to render still more deep and durable the impressions of Christmas Eve. Now, our dear little Sunday school superintendent could not let Christmas eve pass over without any treat. She wanted all the children of her school to come and rejoice with her ; and she intended reading the little Christmas book which she had received a year before. But there was suddenly a great difficulty. When the parents of her scholars heard of this invitation they would come also ; and the little girl could not refuse. Distress fell upon her when she thought of speaking and praying before adults. What was she to do ? She thought, 'If this may be a blessing to them, I must not refuse it ; and if they come I cannot speak to them. Shall I beg my father to come and to help me ? But he always laughed at me and my Sunday school. Nevertheless, I will ask him. She did so, and her father who was not an

incredulous man, but one who had no interest in these things, could not resist the entreaties of his girl; and when Christmas eve came, he was, for an hour, though unwillingly, under the superintendence of his own little girl, the teacher of a large infant and adult Sunday school. The treat was not so brilliant and splendid as ours, but you will allow me to believe that there were also many angels present, and the blessed One whom we adore, and whom the little girl tried to serve and glorify as well as she could. And may I add, that the treat was blessed to the father as to the little girl herself. Oh, my dear fellow-labourers,—oh, my dear Christian friends, if a little girl of eleven years gives us such an example, what should we do—what could we not do—for the glory of our blessed Saviour?"

The interesting engagements of this week of holy excitement were brought to a close on Friday evening, by a Soirée in the Jubilee Memorial Building. A large number of the foreign and country delegates were present. Tea and coffee were provided in the library, and the various rooms were thrown open to the visitors. The Building was decorated for the occasion, by maps and prints, illustrative of Scripture History. The large model of The Tabernacle in the Wilderness, was discussed and explained by Mr. Towers, and one of Solomon's Temple, was exhibited by the Rev. C. H. Bateman, under whose direction it had been constructed. The walls were hung with autographic letters of men and women distinguished in the educational department of public effort. These were all contributed by Mr. Charles Reed, F.S.A., a member of the Committee, who also showed a splendid copy of the Nuremburg Chronicle, 1493; Illuminated Missals of the 15th Century; a chained Bible; a copy of the Solemn League and Covenant with the original signatures and the catechism which Dr. Doddridge's mother used in teaching her infant son on Sunday evenings, illustrating it by the Scripture Dutch tiles, which ornamented the fireplace; also a Bible which cost £3 4s. in 1603, and one of 1862, sold for 10d.

After tea, the friends assembled in the Lecture Hall, under the presidency of Mr. Groser, where, after some short

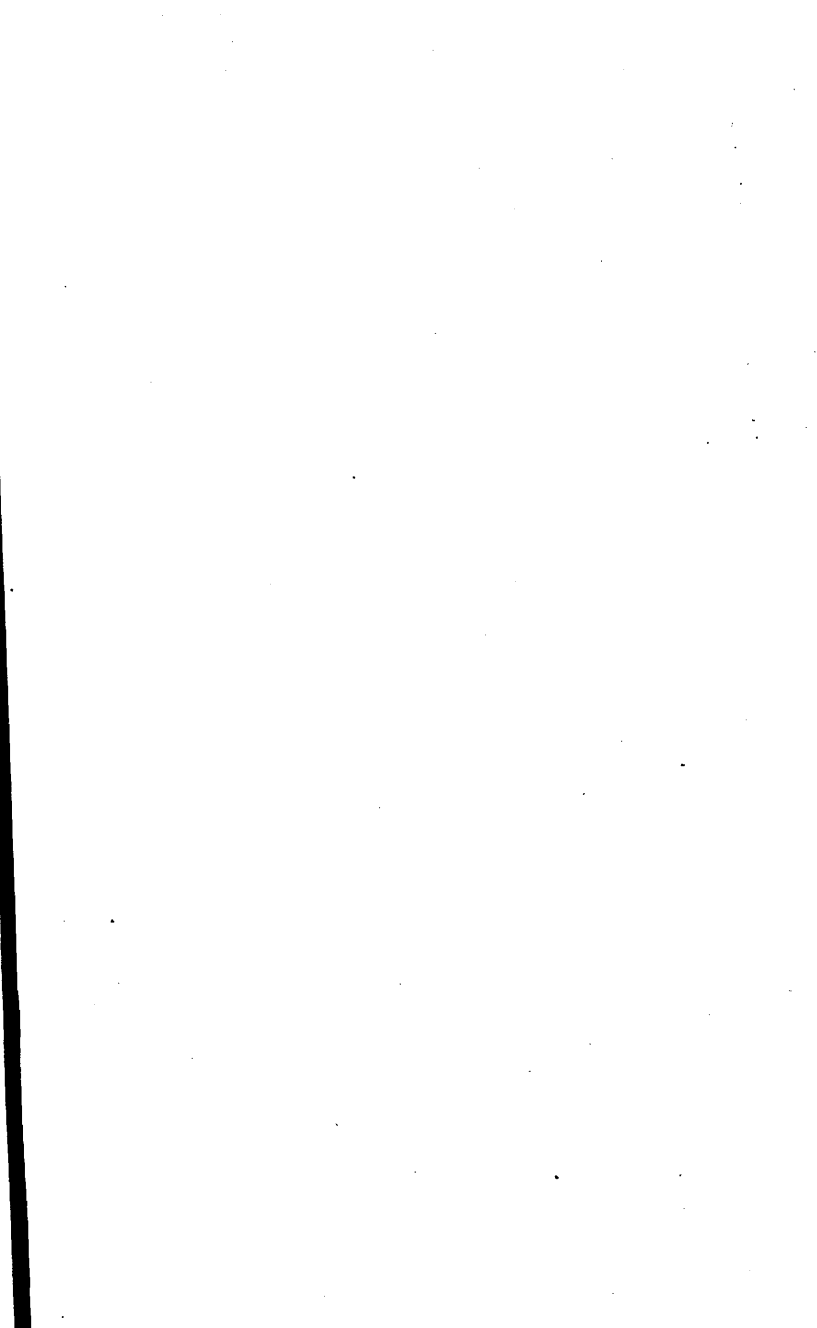
addresses of mutual kind feeling, the parting word was spoken by Mr. Hartley, one of the Secretaries of the Union, to whose judicious arrangements and interesting zeal much of the success of this great undertaking may, under the Divine blessing, be attributed.

Amongst the names of the foreign delegates will be perceived that of Mr. Albert Woodruff, of Brooklyn, New York. This gentleman had devoted much of his time and money in efforts to promote the establishment and improvement of Sunday schools in France, Italy, and Germany. He was not a stranger to the Union, and finding himself, on his return to America, unable to give his personal efforts, or to contribute so largely as heretofore to this continental effort, he requested the Committee to undertake to carry the work on, with such assistance as he might be able to give. They fully sympathised with him in the object he had in view. The Union had for many years supported two schools in Copenhagen; had assisted the formation of schools in Germany, and in 1815, made a grant to the Rev. Francis Martin, to assist him in the formation of a school in Bordeaux. In their Report of the following year, the Committee stated, "That their hopes as to the establishment of Sunday Schools in France are for the present beclouded;" but the schools established at Bordeaux proved the forerunner of many others, and the report of 1823 recorded the opening of a Sunday School at the Protestant Church in Paris, by the Rev. Mr. Monod, who had attended the previous annual meeting of the Union. Two hundred scholars were in attendance, and among them were the sons and daughters of some of the most wealthy and influential Protestants of the capital, who wished to give their offspring the religious advantages of the school, and at the same time to present an example to the other classes of Protestants attending the same church.

In 1827, it was reported to the Union, that a committee for the encouragement of Sunday schools amongst Protestants had been established at Paris, of which Baron de Stael was president; and £20, with copies of the Union publications, were voted in aid of their efforts.

These schools, however, were not conducted in the same manner as those in England and America. They were rather juvenile congregations than schools; and in them the pastor conveyed religious instruction in a simpler form than it was presented from the pulpit. The advantage of employing Christian men and women as teachers, was, however, soon perceived; the schools increased in number, and the greater intercourse with England led to a more intimate acquaintance with the English system. At length, and in the year 1852, the Paris Sunday School Society was formed upon the principles of the Sunday School Union, and applied itself with diligence and success to the work of extending and improving Sunday schools throughout France. A fraternal intercourse has been maintained between the two institutions, and deputations to their annual meetings have been exchanged; and the one school established, with the assistance of the Union, in Bordeaux, in the year 1815, has now multiplied into the large number of 744 schools, 55 of which are in Paris and its suburbs.

After much anxious and prayerful consideration, the Committee undertook this new department of labour, which is carried on under the direction of a Sub-committee specially constituted for this object. The expenses of agents in France and Switzerland are partly defrayed by the Committee, who have also aided similar efforts in Italy, and wholly maintained a Sunday school Mission in Germany. The object in all cases is not merely to seek the establishment of schools where they do not now exist, but to convert the so-called Sunday schools, which are in fact juvenile congregations addressed by the minister, into such schools as are found in England, taught in classes by Christian men and women. The expenditure which this effort involves has been met hitherto by extra contributions, and it is not to be doubted that the Committee will be sustained in this attempt to spread Christian instruction through the youthful population of Continental Europe.





JUBILEE MEDALS.

CHAPTER XI.

THE JUBILEE OF THE UNION.

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On the 13th of July, 1852, commenced the fiftieth year of the existence of the Union. The Committee, in their report to the General Meeting, over which Alfred Rooker, Esq., Mayor of Plymouth, presided, stated generally the mode in which they proposed to celebrate the Jubilee year, and which received the approbation of that assembly. With a view to carry out the resolution then adopted, a meeting of the Committee was held at the Depository, on the 13th of July, for the purpose of offering thanksgiving to Almighty God, for the success which had attended the labours of the society during the long and eventful period of forty-nine years, and to implore a blessing upon the efforts about to be made for the celebration of the Jubilee. In the evening of the same day, a meeting of the ministers, superintendents, secretaries, and representatives of schools connected with the Union, assembled in Surrey Chapel School-room, the site where, forty-nine years previously^{*}, the Union was formed. Mr. Gurney, the founder of the Union, took the chair. There were also present, Mr. James Nisbet, and Mr. Thomas Thompson, the only other survivors of those who took part in the proceedings of that day. It was a gratifying circumstance, and one which correctly marks the catholic character of the institution,

that these three survivors of the little band, who, animated with love to the Saviour, and to the souls of the young, met together on the 13th of July, 1803, and formed the Sunday School Union, should represent respectively three important sections of the Christian church. A sketch of the history of the Union, with the plan suggested by the Committee for commemorating its Jubilee, was laid before the meeting, and the following resolutions unanimously adopted:—

I. That in reviewing the progress of the Sunday School Union, this meeting feels called upon thankfully to acknowledge the Divine providence which has watched over the institution, and made it the means of so greatly extending and improving the Sunday school system, while the disinterestedness, and absence of denominational partialities, which have characterised its proceedings, entitle it to the warmest sympathy and support of evangelical Christians of all denominations.

II. That this meeting considers the fiftieth anniversary of the Society should be celebrated by some suitable memorial—a memorial that should be in itself instrumental in increasing the usefulness of the Union,—and that it is, therefore, desirable to erect a building for the following purposes, viz :—

1. To provide accommodation for the libraries of circulation and reference, which are now made use of by upwards of 600 teachers, at a nominal subscription of 1s. per annum.
2. To accommodate the classes which meet weekly to prepare the lessons to be taught on the following Lord's-day.
3. To enable the teachers of London to meet for occasional conference, or to receive instruction by means of Lectures.
4. To secure enlarged space for the increasing business of the Union.

III. That a subscription be forthwith opened for the purpose of carrying out the above object; and that it is hereby respectfully and earnestly recommended to all ministers, churches, and congregations, and especially to the auxiliaries and country unions, and the teachers and friends of Sunday schools, through-

out the country, to aid the same by quarterly collections, in the schools, on the last Lord's-day in the months of August, November, February, and May next, and by every other means in their power.

The resolutions submitted to the meeting were proposed by the Revs. J. Campbell, D.D., W. Leask, J. Sherman, W. Walters, and Messrs. Althans, Groser, Jackson, Nisbet, and Reed.

In order to bring the subject before the notice of their fellow teachers in the country, the Committee requested one of the secretaries * to accompany the Rev. Dr. Campbell to Manchester, Birmingham, Nottingham, Bristol, and Bath, and the Rev. Dr. Archer to Halifax, Sheffield, and Leicester; while one member of the Committee, with the Rev W. S. Edwards, visited Newcastle, Sunderland, and Darlington, and another with the Rev. C. H. Bateman, attended meetings at Edinburgh, Dundee, and Perth. In addition to the services thus rendered, Dr. Campbell had given to the object the influence which he possessed as the conductor of an important organ of public opinion. The meeting at Manchester was remarkable from various circumstances. The large assembly was convened in the Roby School-room, and presided over by Mr. James Sidebottom, who alluded most touchingly to his delightful recollections of the instructions and religious impressions he received when a scholar in that school. It was addressed by Mr. James Kershaw, M.P. for Stockport, who had been a Sunday scholar, and who stated that although his ill state of health made his coming imprudent, he felt himself unable to stay away from a meeting designed to promote the Sunday school cause. Mr. Thomas Thompson also attended the meeting. To these may be added the address delivered by Dr. Campbell on "The Moral and Spiritual Destitution of the Metropolis, the Inadequacy of all Existing Instrumentalities for removing it, and the Sunday School, as affording the only Means of staying the further Progress of the Evil." This was afterwards published, under the title of "An Address to the Churches of England, with their Pastors and Deacons;" and being

* Mr. Watson.

re-printed by the Committee, was largely circulated. The visit to Edinburgh resulted in the Union of that city entering into connection with the Sunday School Union, and the whole of them made its operations better known, raised the Sunday school in the estimation of Christians, and showed the importance of its being made still more efficient as a part of the instrumentality of the church for fulfilling the command of the Saviour, to go into all the world and preach the gospel to every creature.

The engagements connected with the celebration of the Jubilee commenced on Sunday, July 10th, 1853. A Devotional service was held at Lion Street Chapel, Walworth, presided over by the Rev. W. Howieson. The attendance was numerous. In about twenty Metropolitan Chapels sermons were preached and collections made on behalf of the Jubilee Fund. In the afternoon, upwards of 50,000 scholars were gathered together in various chapels in London. The weather was propitious, and the chapels were in most cases densely thronged with the scholars and their teachers.

The Jubilee sermon was preached by the Rev. Thomas Archer, D.D., at Surrey Chapel, on Tuesday evening, July 12th. The text selected, as Dr. Archer remarked, was the same as that preached upon more than forty years before to the members of the Union, "by a venerable servant of Almighty God still in the Christian church below, I mean Jabez Bunting, which has formed the subject matter of thousands of sermons already, and will form the great motto text for thousands more when we have passed into eternity; Nehemiah xi. 3; 'I am doing a great work, so that I cannot come down; why should the work cease whilst I leave it and come down to you?'" Scarcely could the solemnity of the place and of the occasion restrain the excited feelings of the audience, while the preacher expatiated on the GRANDEUR OF THE SUNDAY SCHOOL WORK,—in the means which it employs, the motive with which it is prosecuted, and the splendour of its results,—and briefly but vividly sketched the characters of Joseph John Freeman, John Williams, and William Knibb, as the first fruits of Sunday school labour, and

added, "I have spoken of these three, I might invoke the names of many who shine in a glorious galaxy above ; I might appeal to thousands of missionaries now at work among the heathen, who can look back and trace distinctly their first impulses of spiritual life and devotion to Christ, to their connection with the Sunday school, and I say, looking at the sanctified in glory above, and to those struggling on earth beneath, if the Sunday school has done nothing more than this, it has done an unspeakably 'great work.' A great work has been done, knowingly and visibly done ; we can see it in London, at this Jubilee of 1853, but what shall be the work seen, distinctly, fully, and for ever, not in the Jubilee of the Sunday School Union, but in the Jubilee of the Universe—The Jubilee of Eternity !"

The proceedings of the Jubilee day, Wednesday, July 13th, were commenced by a public breakfast at the London Tavern, at which 500 persons were present, and the Right Honourable Thomas Challis, M.P., Lord Mayor of London, and Treasurer of the Union, presided. He was supported on the right and left by Mr. Thomas Thompson, and Mr. James Nisbet, the only two gentlemen then living, beside the founder, Mr. W. B. Gurney, who were present at the formation of the Society. After breakfast, addresses were delivered by the Rev. Thomas James, who took part in the first public meeting in 1812, the Rev. John Adey, the Rev. C. H. Bateman, Mr. Edward Ball, M.P., Mr. Alderman Wire, the Rev. Joshua Russell, and Mr. Henry Althans.

It should be mentioned that the Lord Mayor, who had thus presided, had given the influence of his high office to the promotion of Christian education, by inviting a very large number of Sunday school teachers, and other public educators, including the Committee of the Union, to share in the hospitalities of the Mansion House on the 30th of the previous month.

The Jubilee Meeting was held at Exeter Hall on the evening of the Jubilee day. Mr. Gurney, the founder and president of the Union, occupied the chair during the early part of the meeting, and was succeeded by Mr. Thomas Thompson. A letter was communicated from Mr. Alderman Heard, of Not-

tingham, one of the early secretaries of the Union, expressing his regret at his unavoidable absence, and enclosing the sum of £70, subscribed in that town towards the Jubilee Fund. A letter was also read from the Rev. Thomas Hartwell Horne, who took part in the first public meeting of the Union. The resolutions submitted to the meeting were supported by addresses from the Rev. George Smith, Rev. R. S. Ward, Rev. W. M. Whittemore, Rector of St. James's, Aldgate, Mr. James Nisbet, Rev. Charles Stovel, Mr. Robert Gammon, and Rev. W. Gill, of Raratonga.

This meeting closed the engagements of the Jubilee year, which had been thought a season of sacred enjoyment. The interest of the various meetings was increased by the use of hymns kindly contributed for the occasion by Mrs. Gilbert, Miss Hollett, Rev. J. Aveling, Messrs. Montgomery, Sissons, Soul, Holland, Edmeston, W. H. Groser, and Gover. It was anticipated that the hymn contributed by Mr. Montgomery beginning "The grace of Jesus Christ our Lord," would be the last written by him, but he was prevailed upon to write one more for the Whitsuntide festival of the Sheffield Union, with which his poetical labours were closed.

The Committee proceeded to carry out the desire of the members, that a building should be erected as a permanent memorial of the Jubilee, and which might aid the Union in its efforts to extend and improve the Sunday school system. It was found impracticable to obtain freehold ground in a situation convenient for the business of the Union, but a lease of a vacant piece of ground in the Old Bailey, belonging to St. Thomas' hospital, was secured for eighty years, from Midsummer, 1854, at an annual rental of £75. Premiums were offered to three architects for the best plan, and that sent in by Mr. Charles G. Searle was selected. On December 18th, 1855, the corner-stone was laid by the Treasurer, Mr. Alderman Challis, M.P., Prayer was offered by the Rev. Joseph Angus, D.D., President of Stepney College, and the Rev. James Spence, and an address delivered by the Rev. James Hamilton, D.D. After this ceremony had been performed, the company adjourned to the Milton Club,

where tea was provided. A statement was then read on behalf of the Committee, and addresses delivered by the Treasurer, and the Rev. Messrs. Spence, Archer, D.D., Whittemore, Leask, Adey, Green, and Richardson.

The attention of the Committee was occupied through the year 1856 with the completion, opening, and employment of the Jubilee Memorial Building. With one exception, and that not of a serious nature, no injury was sustained by those engaged in its erection. The weather was also unusually favourable, and the building was completed to the entire satisfaction of the Committee. The opening services took place on Tuesday, October 28th. The delegates from the country unions, and the officers of the four London Auxiliaries and their branches, joined the Committee on the morning of that day, and united with them in devotional exercises, presided over by Mr. Thomas Thompson, then the sole survivor of those present at the formation of the Union. After breakfast, in the library, a conference was held on "The Advantages and Requirements of the Times in relation to the Sunday School Work." In the evening a more public gathering took place in the Lecture Hall, when those present in the morning were joined by ministers and gentlemen, who took part in the Jubilee services, the donors to the Jubilee Fund, and the officers of the principal religious institutions in London. The Honourable Arthur F. Kinnaird, M.P., the president, occupied the chair. The Rev. Messrs. Adey and Howieson conducted the devotional exercises, and addresses were delivered by Mr. Edward Corderoy and the Rev. Dr. Archer. On a subsequent day, the committees of the four London Auxiliaries were invited to meet the Committee, and on another occasion the Superintendents of all the schools connected with the Union. By these means a large number of the active labourers in the Sunday school work were furnished with opportunities of inspecting the building they had assisted to raise, and of judging of its adaptation for the purpose it was desired to promote.

The total expense incurred in the erection was £8,327 5s. 9d., towards which there had been received £6,009 6s. 7d., leaving

a balance of £2,317 19s. 2d. to be provided. The existence of so large a debt would have proved a great inconvenience had not the Committee been assisted by the kind loan of two sums of £1000 each, the one at three per cent., and the other at four per cent., interest. Several contributions to the fund much cheered the hearts of the Committee; a renewed gift of 100 francs from the Paris Sunday School Society, a grant of 100 guineas from the Corporation of the City of London, and a contribution of 130 dollars (£26 9s.) from the Sunday scholars and teachers at Aitutaki, Polynesia. The circumstances attending this liberal gift are interesting. The Rev. W. Gill, Missionary to Raratonga, arrived in England shortly previous to the meeting held in 1853, in commemoration of the Jubilee, and took part in the proceedings of that memorable day. In the course of his address, he said, "I am sure that had all the Missionaries in the South Sea Islands known that this was to be the Jubilee year of the Sunday School Union, they would have sent either oil, or arrowroot, or something else, and claimed a niche in the edifice which you are about to erect as a monument to future generations of the success of this institution; and if I be spared, as I hope I may be, in two or three years to go back, I do pledge myself to you, sir, and to this assembly, that I will get some stone in that building to be erected which shall be dedicated to the South Sea Missionaries." These words were reported and printed, and found their way to Polynesia. The Rev. H. Royle, of Aitutaki, brought the subject before his schools, and they at once determined to redeem the pledge thus given, and in order to do so, cut down firewood for whale ships, and carried it in their boats across a lagoon of very troubled water, of nine miles in extent, and in which passage they were not unfrequently swamped. It was proposed to raise 50 dollars; this accomplished, 50 more were proposed. This, too, they obtained; five more were brought in to begin another fifty, when Mr. Royle thought it right to restrain the impetuosity of the generous emotion. "Hold, my children," said he, "Our friend, Mr. Gill, only asked it to be permitted the Hervey group to purchase a few bricks, but when Raratonga and Mangaia shal

have sent in their proportion, our group will then have the honour of supplying a few stones from the Ebenezer Quarry, towards the erection of the Jubilee Hall."

The right employment of the additional accommodation afforded by the building was a matter of anxious deliberation with the Committee. It was thought desirable to enlarge the trade department, so as to enable those interested in education to find at the Depository whatever they need in carrying on those operations, whether in Sunday or daily schools. In considering this subject, the Committee soon found that it would be necessary to place at the head of the business some one well acquainted with its nature, and deeply interested in the progress of Sunday schools. It had hitherto been superintended almost from its commencement by Mr. Peter Jackson, one of the Secretaries, to whose untiring and gratuitous labours its prosperity was greatly owing. But it was felt that the increasing business could not be prudently left to the care of gratuitous agency, and that teachers, especially those in the country, would derive much benefit from there being always at the Depository some one who could render them the assistance and advice they might need. The Committee found that it would be convenient and agreeable to Mr. Jackson to devote himself entirely to a work which had for more than thirty years occupied the principal part of his leisure, and they therefore felt that they were promoting the interests of the institution by appointing him to the newly created office.

The celebration of the Jubilee, with the erection and opening of the Jubilee Memorial Building, were accompanied by the removal of many members of the Committee and other friends of the Union. The Committee had indulged the hope, that although the infirm state of health of Mr. Lloyd for some years past had compelled him to reside in the country, yet that he would be able to take part in the commemoration of the Jubilee, towards the fund connected with which he had contributed £105, but his Master had determined otherwise, and on the 22nd of April, 1853, he entered into rest, having reached his sixty-second year. He had very recently presented to the Union a little

work, entitled "The Bible Chain," and one of his last acts was to dictate (for the labour of writing was too much for his enfeebled frame) the necessary corrections in the proof-sheets of this publication.

In the same year, Mr. Stephen Warner, a member of the Committee, who held the office of Secretary a few months previously to the appointment of Mr. Lloyd, and who was one of the Sub-Committee who examined the prospectus of the Teachers' Magazine, was elected an honorary member of the Committee, but did not long continue in that office, having died in the year 1857.

The death of Mr. Richard Lawrence Sturtevant, formerly one of the members of the Committee, and who had for many years held the office of Trustee, was reported to the members at the annual meeting in 1853. Mr. William Groser was thereupon appointed one of the Trustees of the funds and property of the Union.

In the Report for 1854, the Committee announced the death of Mr. H. D. Wilson, for twenty-five years the active, zealous, and intelligent Secretary of the Newcastle Union; and also the resignation of one of their number, Mr. William Bugby, who had for thirty-six years devoted himself to the development and application of the objects of the Union, especially in the aid he afforded in the preparation and revision of many of its publications, and by the numerous contributions of his pen to the Magazine and Hymn Book, and the regularity and punctuality of his attendance at the several early Sub-Committee meetings, of which he was a member.

This year also witnessed the departure to the upper and better world, of the venerable James Montgomery, on Sunday, April 30th, 1854, in his 83rd year. He had been enabled, although in feeble health, to continue some of his accustomed employments almost up to the day of his death, having presided at the weekly board of the Sheffield Infirmary, and afterwards walked home, a mile distant. Any detail of the events of his life would be out of place here, but it should be mentioned that he took an active part, in connection with Mr. George Bennett, in the

formation of the Sheffield Union, and served as vice-president from its commencement in 1812. On the death of Mr. Joseph Read, the President, he succeeded to the office, which he retained till his death. In a letter addressed by Mr. Sissons, the Secretary of the Sheffield Union, to one of the Secretaries, Mr. S. says:—

“To his energy, piety and indomitable zeal, the existence and early history of our Union is greatly indebted, while his poetic temperament, conjoined with a remarkable child-like simplicity, rendered him accessible and useful to all with whom he had to do. Willing at all times to take a portion of the work involved in the Union, he seemed indifferent as to the post he might occupy, so that he might be useful. Preparing reports out of a mass of entangled materials, he for twenty years laboured at a time overwhelmed with public and private business; at another time he visited, along with Mr. Bennett, every school in the neighbourhood; and at all our meetings, public, private, and social, so long as health permitted, he was a constant attendant, and afforded the most valuable advice.

“Of his poetry, or rather his hymns, associated with Sunday school anniversaries, &c., I may remark, that undoubtedly these were the foundation of that collection which he published under the title of ‘The Christian Psalmist,’ and it will be found that some of his best and happiest effusions there printed are those he wrote expressly for our Union Anniversaries. It was a labour of love to meet our recurring wants for the space of forty-two years, and while we were locally more directly blessed with these contributions, yet the church of Christ has thereby shared advantages which, but for his connection with our Union, might never have had existence. The harp of the sweet singer in Israel is hushed, but it sweeps with finer strains in a better world.

“I recollect the interview we had with Mr. M. when you were last in Sheffield, and the cheerful, almost playful vivacity, he showed on that occasion. The excitement was of short duration, and was succeeded by languor and pain. Yet he would on no account forego the pleasure of seeing his friends, and especially those connected with Sunday schools.

At the first meeting of the Committee appointed at the Annual Meeting in 1854, they received the resignation of Mr. Robert Latter who had been a member of that body for thirty-six years, during twenty-three of which he had zealously and most efficiently watched over the finances of the Union. In the providence of God he was called to New Zealand without any prospect of revisiting his native land. The Committee were therefore compelled to accept his resignation, but felt unwilling that their official connexion with a fellow labourer so highly esteemed should cease without some public and united testimonial of their regard. They invited Mr. Latter and his family to a meeting, at which the Treasurer, Mr. Alderman Challis, M.P., presided, when a handsomely bound copy of the Sacred Scriptures was presented to him on behalf of the Union, to which, out of the proceeds of a subscription raised among the members of the Committee, a silver tea service was added. He was affectionately commended to the Divine protection, and arrived safely at the land of his adoption. He was spared to see his family satisfactorily provided for; then his useful life was brought to a sudden close by an accidental fall into the sea, when on his way to visit one of his married daughters. Mr. George William Burge succeeded him in the office of trustee, and Mr. Josiah Forsaith in that of Finance Secretary to the Union.

Mr. James Nisbet, who has been frequently mentioned as one of those present at the formation of the Union, was also now called to enter into his rest. After a lengthened career of usefulness, having attained his 70th year, he was up on the Tuesday morning at six o'clock, and at eight was at his weekly post, the Orphan Working School. On Wednesday he was much interested by receiving, in one of his letters, specimens of penmanship by the inmates of the Idiot Asylum, and had just been inspecting them when his medical adviser came in. That friend was speaking to him, when suddenly his countenance changed, and from the midst of his family and work his spirit fled, in a moment, to the vision of his God.*

* Funeral Sermon, by Rev. James Hamilton., D.D.

The sudden decease of the Rev. Dr. Beaumont, at Hull, while engaged in giving out a hymn in the course of public worship on the Lord's-day, also deeply affected the Committee. The readiness with which he ever responded to the invitations presented to him to advocate the interests of the Union, and the ability and earnestness with which he was always prompt to urge on the work of the religious instruction of the young on the Lord's day, had much endeared him to the members of the Union, and there was no one whose presence at their meetings was more cordially greeted.

Nor could the Committee pass by unnoticed the decease of Mr. William Jones, formerly a member of the Committee, but who having given up his professional pursuits to devote himself to the service of The Religious Tract Society, of which he ultimately became the corresponding secretary and superintendent, necessarily ceased to take an active part in the management of the Union. He continued, however, deeply interested in the religious instruction of the young, observed the onward progress of the Union with pleasure, and on more than one occasion advocated its claims at its anniversary assembly.

Mr. George Deane, who was for some time a member of the Committee, also died November 18th, 1854. Having retired from business to Woodbridge, Suffolk, he was there actively engaged in the care of a senior class, the members of which he not only instructed on the Lord's day, but invited to his home on the evenings of other days of the week, assisting them thereby to obtain secular knowledge. He was much interested in cottage meetings and a cold taken while conducting one, was the means of bringing his useful life to a close. He was a contributor to the Union Magazine, under the title of Old George Albany.

Mr George Mogridge, the Old Humphrey of the Religious Tract Society's publications, and the Old Alan Grey of the Bible Class Magazine, was also called to lay down his pen, which had been so long employed to interest and instruct the large number of readers who had been accustomed to greet his quaint sayings with delight.

The Committee had also to mourn the loss of three of their colleagues, with whom, up to the very period of their departure, it was their privilege to be closely associated, and who had all been permitted to labour for their Saviour up to their removal from earth—a removal which in each case took place on the Lord's-day. On Sunday, Sep. 3rd, 1854, Mr. John Shorman, who had been for some years a member of the Committee and a zealous teacher in the West of London, died after a very short illness. The vacancy thus occasioned was supplied by the appointment of Mr. Augustus Benham, who, on the resignation of Mr. Forsaith, in 1859, became the Finance Secretary, and Mr. Fountain J. Hartley, was appointed in his room.

This breach in the Committee was followed in a few months by the removal of one of its oldest members, Mr. Henry Althans, who was called to his reward on Sunday, March 4th, 1855, having attended a public meeting and advocated the cause of religious instruction on the Tuesday preceding his death. He joined the Committee in the year 1814 as Secretary of the newly formed East London Auxiliary, of which he became successively the Secretary, Treasurer, and President. For a few years he held the office of one of the general secretaries of the Union, and ever took a most lively interest in its affairs, having employed, in the discharge of his duties, the energy of his youth, and the experience of his advancing years. The estimation in which he was held by the teachers in the East of London had been shown in his lifetime by the presentation to him of his portrait in oil, which is now deposited in the Jubilee Memorial Building of the Union, and was further testified by a thousand of them accompanying his remains to their resting place in Abney Park Cemetery, and by double that number assembling [in Sion Chapel, Whitechapel (in the school connected with which Mr. Althans commenced his Sunday School labours about forty-five years previously), to hear a funeral sermon, preached by the Rev. Charles Stovel, from the very appropriate language of the Scripture in relation to Hezekiah, as recorded in 2 Chronicles xxxi. 21; "And in every work that he began in the service

of the house of God, and in the law, and in the commandments, to seek his God, he did it with all his heart, and prospered."

The feelings excited by the loss of so beloved a friend and colleague had not passed away, when the Committee were surprised by the unexpected intelligence of the death of the founder and president of the Union, Mr. W. B. Gurney. He presided at a Committee of the Baptist Missionary Society on the 13th of March; on the 19th he dictated an answer to the Committee, stating his inability to accept their invitation to lay the foundation-stone of the Jubilee Memorial Building; and on Sunday, the 25th March; he entered into his rest. At the request of the Committee, the Rev. John Aldis, the pastor of the church in Maze Pond, of which Mr. Gurney first became a member, preached a sermon at Bloomsbury Chapel, on April 18th, to the members and friends of the Union. Some of the sentences of that sermon may form an appropriate close to this solemn catalogue of losses which the Committee had to report to the members at their Annual Meeting, in May, 1855.

"We gather, alas! from time to time around the graves of our friends. As we grow older the world seems to have something of a melancholy tinge upon it. Dark shadows flit across its pathway, and only as, by drawing nearer to the Eternal, we get brighter visions of the glory beyond, is this loss supportable. How terrible is death! How dark and desolate the grave! Our departed friend had the grace of Christ for his solace and support during the last fifty-nine years of his life, and the angel of the covenant who attended him every step of the way, followed him also through the gloom and solitude of the dying chamber; even there he did not forsake him. In mercy, and to spare him pain, God poured upon his senses the gentle lull of sleep. Communicate what was passing in his own mind he could not. Exhort he could not. Nor was it needed, for all around him knew and loved the Saviour. But he has left behind him a glorious testimony, which I pray God to seal upon your hearts. Go away from the grave once more, but go not disconsolate. The angel of mercy has two voices, one concerning the departed, 'Blessed are the dead that die in the Lord from

henceforth : yea, saith the Spirit, that they may rest from their labours ; and their works do follow them ;' and one for the living, that they may gird themselves with energy and hope, and in the name of the Lord lift up their banners, determining with simple earnest truthfulness of purpose not to be 'slothful, but followers of them who through faith and patience inherit the promises.' "

In the year 1856, the Committee were again called upon to part with a highly esteemed colleague, Mr. John Stoneman, who, in 1815, became superintendent of a branch school connected with Silver Street School—held at first in the Old Bailey, and afterwards in the British School, Harp Alley, Farringdon Street. There he presided with much ability, attending with singular regularity twice a day for nearly twenty-eight years. In 1844, he became a teacher in the school in Calthorpe Street, Gray's Inn Road, and in 1849, was elected the superintendent, which office he sustained at the time of his decease. He became a member of the Committee, as a representative from the North London Auxiliary in the year 1825, and by his diligent and punctual attendance at the early morning meetings of the sub-Committees, by visits to country unions, by counsel and aid given in the preparation and revision of the publications of the Society, caused the Committee to record on their minutes their expressions of grateful remembrance and lamentations for the loss they had sustained, and their prayer to the Lord of the Vineyard that many such labourers may be raised up to imitate the departed, in the extent, duration, and efficiency of his labours.

This record of departed saints may be appropriately closed with a notice of the decease of Mr. Thomas Thompson. His last service for the Union was connected with the celebration of the Jubilee of the Bath Union, on which occasion a large public meeting was held at the Guildhall of that city, under the presidency of the Mayor. Mr. Thompson kindly entertained at his residence, at Prior Park, one of the Secretaries* of the Union on his visit. Although so greatly advanced in years, the

* Mr. Watson.

deputation found, on arriving at the house on the evening preceding the meeting, that Mr. and Mrs. Thompson were gone to attend a Sunday school meeting in the country. On the following evening, he attended the meeting at the Guildhall, and the Mayor being compelled to leave the chair, Mr. Thompson undertook the duties of chairman during the remainder of the evening. On December 8, 1865, he wrote his letters as usual, and sent them to the post, immediately after which he became indisposed, and Mrs. Thompson was called. He said to her, "There will be none of this in heaven with Jesus," they were his last words. Turning to her whom he so tenderly loved, he raised his lips to kiss her for the last time, smiled on her with ineffable sweetness, and without another struggle passed away, and thus the large and loving heart stood still.*

* Sunday School Teachers' Magazine, 1866, p.p. 112.

CHAPTER XII.

WHAT HAS THE UNION DONE?

CONTENTS.—The Union has aided in the extension of Sunday Schools—Statistics—Sunday Schools in England and abroad—Erection of new School-rooms—Opened Schools for Infants, and simplified method of instruction—Aided in procuring a Cheap Bible—Established principle of uniform Scripture Lessons—Scholars indebted to it for their Lending Libraries—For Juvenile Periodical Literature—For Teachers, established Library and Reading room—Issued publications for their instruction—Benefit of personal intercourse—The Union not a Local Institution—The Mission of the Union—The proper place of the Sunday School—Effort now being made to circulate religious knowledge not always praiseworthy—The earnest *teacher the best corrective of the evil*—**CONCLUSION.**

The object of the preceding narrative has been to trace the gradual progress of the Sunday School Union, and to point out the means by which it has sought to carry out the extension and improvement of the Sunday school system. This concluding chapter will be devoted to an attempt to bring before the mind of the reader, in a more condensed form, the facts which have been related. The question has often been asked by those who have not given much attention to the operations of the Society, "What has the Union done?" Having received an impression that all which is necessary to carry out the Sunday school system is to open a school room, and to set some young persons to instruct the children seeking for admission, and perceiving that the Union does not undertake this work, such inquirers conclude that its labours are unnecessary. For their benefit, therefore, it may be desirable to answer briefly the question, "What has the Union done?"

It has greatly aided in the extension of Sunday Schools. The numbers of Sunday scholars within a circuit of a few miles round London, was estimated, shortly after the formation of the Union, to be 21,000. At the time of taking the census of 1851, this amount had swelled to 138,000.

The last report of the Union (1868), states the number of scholars in the schools connected with the Union to be 175,085, not including a large number of schools unconnected with the Union. A large portion of this increase may be fairly considered to have arisen from the operations of the Union; in drawing the attention of Christian churches to the subject; from the necessities of various neighbourhoods having been thus made known: and from the interest excited in the minds of pious youths, as well as from the direct assistance rendered by the Union. But it has already been mentioned, that the formation of this Institution was followed by the establishment of similar unions in various parts of the country; they are not confined to England, but are found in Scotland, Wales, and Ireland. The larger part of them are founded on the catholic principle of admitting all evangelical schools to partake in their advantages, while others are more restrictive, but they are all extending and improving the Sunday school system. Nor has the influence of the Association formed in 1803, been limited to the British Isles. On the continent of Europe, in Asia, in Southern Africa, in Australia, in America, the same plans have been adopted, and in some instances with great success.

But in order that schools may be efficiently carried on, it is important that there should be convenient places in which they may assemble. In the earlier part of the Union's existence there was little provision of this sort made, and the schools were conducted under very unfavourable circumstances. During the past few years, however, *the Union has aided in the erection of new school rooms*, by granting £7,000 in aid of that object in various parts of the country.

It has opened the schools to infants, and has delivered the younger scholars from the drudgery formerly attendant upon the A B C and elementary classes. Many teachers remember the alphabet on boards, and the various devices which were adopted, in order to bring the younger scholars acquainted with the art of reading. All this is now swept away by the use of the Letter Box in infant classes, by which means the

scholars can be admitted into the schools at a much earlier age than heretofore, and receive instruction in a form which economises the labour of teachers, interest the scholars, enables them to use the Scriptural lesson of the day, and which so rapidly advances them into the mechanical art of reading, that further elementary instruction becomes unnecessary, and the scholars are transferred from the infant to the Scripture class.

The Sunday School Union has aided in procuring a cheap Bible for Sunday Scholars. It has always felt the greatest anxiety that each scholar should be the possessor of a portable copy of the Divine Word. Hence arose the repeated applications to the Committee of the British and Foreign Bible Society, which resulted in the gradual lowering of the prices to Sunday scholars, until at length the monopoly was practically destroyed, and every one may possess a copy of the Scriptures at the lowest price for which it can be prepared.

The Union has established the principle of uniform Scripture Lessons in Sunday Schools. No longer are the teachers found selecting the lesson without consideration, but the Scripture is read consecutively, and studied as a whole. The teachers have that assistance rendered them in their preparatory studies, which fits them to take the head of their classes without anxiety, and the whole work of the school has a definite character. The 32,000 copies of the Notes on Scripture Lessons, issued monthly by the Union, form but a small part of the benefit derived ; to ascertain its full extent reference must be made to the numerous similar publications issued by other bodies, founded upon the principle introduced by the Union.

The scholars are largely indebted to the Union for their Lending Libraries, these important appendages to Sunday Schools. It is no slight advantage that teachers can find at the Depository of the Union 1,179 volumes, adapted for the perusal of the young, which are certified not to contain anything prejudicial to their minds. It is an encouragement to authors to prepare, and to publishers to issue suitable publications, that such an opening for their sale should be afforded. But the benefit has not stopped here. In order to encourage teachers to establish

and maintain in efficiency libraries for their scholars, the Committee have for several years past made grants of books for this purpose, at about one third the publication price. The number of libraries thus granted up to the 31st of March, 1868, is 7,879, the value of which, at the publication price, was £43,140 19s. 10d., but for which the schools only paid the sum of £14,380 6s. 7d.

Juvenile Periodical Literature originated with the Sunday School Union. From the members of its Committee proceeded "The Youth's Magazine," which introduced the writings of so many valued authors to the notice of the public, and which has been the cherished companion and guide of the younger members of the Christian families of this land. In the Committee of the Union was the idea of a "Penny Magazine for Children" first started; by a teacher connected with the Union was the first such magazine issued, without a thought that it would prove the precursor of a department of literature, expanding to so enormous an extent, and, with all its attendant evils, conferring an immense amount of benefit. By the Union are the senior scholars and junior teachers in Sunday Schools supplied monthly with THE BIBLE CLASS MAGAZINE, adapted to their age and circumstances; and THE CHILD'S OWN MAGAZINE proves that even the younger scholars are not forgotten; and KIND WORDS seeks to provide for boys and girls a weekly periodical which may counteract the influence of many injurious publications urged upon their acceptance.

While the Sunday School Union has thus cared for the scholars, it has not been unmindful of the teachers. Ever feeling, that upon their efficiency depends, under the Divine blessing, the hoped-for success, the Committee have sought, as far as in them lay, to aid their fellow labourers in preparing for their work, as well as in discharging all the duties connected with it.

They have *provided a Library of Reference and Circulation*, comprising 4,865 volumes, to which the members of the Union have free access, at a nominal subscription of one shilling per annum.

The publications of the Union designed for the instruction of teachers are numerous and varied. These have not been prepared by mere theorists, but by those who have tested by actual experiments every plan they recommend. It may, without impropriety, be said, that in these works teachers find the matured judgment of those who have devoted their energies for many years to the instruction of the young. How much have teachers been indebted to the Teachers' Magazine, which, although not belonging to the Union, was commenced and carried on by members of the Committee? It has been followed by the Union Magazine, aiding, likewise, in the instruction and assistance of teachers, whilst the "Directions for the Establishment and Management of Sunday Schools," "Sunday School Class Register, Almanac, and Diary," "Notes on Scripture Lessons," and the various prize essays written at the invitation of the Committee and published by them, all attest their increasing activity in meeting the wants of their fellow labourers.

The Committee have added to these efforts for the benefit of Teachers the advantages of personal intercourse. They have established at the Depository a Training Class, combining the preparation of the lesson for the ensuing Lord's-day, with lectures and model lessons presided over by one of their number, and open to the visits of teachers, whether in London or from the country, and which has formed a model for many similar classes. The Committee have sought intercourse with teachers in the country, and deputations have visited England, Wales, Scotland, and Ireland, for this purpose, at the expense of the Society. Conference has thus been held with thousands of teachers, who have uniformly expressed their gratification at this friendly intercourse.

The Sunday School Union is sometimes spoken of as if it were a mere local institution. The preceding review will show that its benevolent efforts embrace every spot where there is a young immortal needing instruction in the way of salvation. There is no doubt that at its origin nothing more was contemplated than the benefit of the Sunday Schools of the metropolis; but the providence of God soon opened for it a more enlarged sphere

of usefulness, and since the formation of the four London Auxiliaries, the many local efforts of the Union have devolved upon them, and the General Committee have devoted their attention to the extension and improvement of Sunday Schools throughout the world. Very much of their time has been occupied in the preparation of works designed to assist in the establishment and conduct of these institutions, and these works are, perhaps, more valuable to the schools situated in the distant parts of this land, or in foreign countries, than to those in London itself. The granting pecuniary assistance was not contemplated by the founders of the Union, nor was it until the celebration of the Jubilee of Sunday Schools in 1831, that this part of the Society's operations became of importance. The contributions from the public to the funds of the Union have never been of any great amount, and have not amounted on the average to £400 a year, while the publications of the Union are sold at a low price, and, in some cases, do not even meet their expenses. There is, however, one branch of the business which yields a profit—the sale of publications approved by the Committee, and for which a commission is received. As the services of the Committee and Officers of the Union are gratuitous, a surplus is thus obtained, the disposal of which will show yet more distinctly how far removed the benefits of the Union are from being of a merely local character.

At the celebration of the Jubilee of the Union in 1853, when the Committee were appealing to the whole country for assistance towards the erection of the Jubilee Memorial Building, it became necessary to meet this objection. The grants made out of the funds of the Union from the year 1831 to 1853, were found to have amounted to £28,704 2s. 7d., and the enquiry had then to be made, Where had this large sum been expended? Had the Sunday Schools of the metropolis alone received the benefit? It was found that these questions could be answered with sufficient exactness for all practical purposes. On analysing the various items of which the total is composed, it appeared that the schools of the metropolis had received of this sum £7,118 1s. 7d., and the remaining £21,586 1s. 0d., or three-

fourths of the whole, had been applied for the benefits of schools in other parts of our own country, in the British Colonies, and in foreign lands ; a statement which shows that the benefits of the Union are not merely local, but are felt wherever a necessity exists for their exercise.

In thus reviewing the origin and progress of the Sunday School Union, it is impossible not to feel that this Institution has an important mission to discharge in connection with the various efforts making for the extension of the Redeemer's kingdom. It has always been one of those delightful associations where the symbols of parties are unknown, and love to the Divine Redeemer is found to be an adequate bond of union. Long may it so continue ! The preceding narrative has shown the varied character of the duties devolving on the Union in connection with the extension and improvement of the Sunday School system, and the Committees, upon whom from time to time the management of the Institution has rested, have felt no difficulty in discharging those duties, although assembled from various sections of the Christian church, and holding on some points very different sentiments ; but they love as brethren, and they do not find these differences of views any hindrance in the way of their uniting most cordially in efforts to train up the rising youth of our land in the fear of the Lord. In the review of the past, there is much that affords encouragement ; it is a token for good, that God has put it into the hearts of sabbath school labourers, from time to time, to sit down and enquire prayerfully whether our schools are as useful as they should be, and if not, where is the deficiency, and how can it be supplied ? The increasing interest taken by the Christian church in these institutions is very cheering ; it is a new thing to witness, as we now do, the representatives of the churches listening attentively to lengthened discourses on subjects connected with the practical working of the Sunday school system, and employing much valuable time in discussions upon the suggestions presented to their attention. The periodical press has caught the feeling, and their pages are being devoted to the consideration of questions which would not, in past years, have been thought

sufficiently important to occupy the attention of their readers. Nothing but good can be anticipated from these events. Sunday schools only occupy their proper place when they are considered as an important part of the church's agency, in carrying forward the evangelization of the world ; a result which will be mainly secured by their having the sympathy, guidance, and influence of the pastors enlisted on their behalf. And much cause is there that Christian churches should avail themselves of every opportunity for maintaining the importance of an enlightened acquaintance with the Word of God. In various directions are efforts being made to cultivate a religious feeling amongst the people, but in too many cases, it is to be feared the religious feeling thus excited will rest in an attention to outward forms, without any influence being exerted on the heart. Under whatever name this may be done, the result must be most alarming to the spiritual and eternal interests of man. The labours of the pious, devoted, intelligent teacher form one of the most effectual correctives to this evil. His text book is the whole uncorrupted Word of God ; he studies it with his scholars, under the conviction which he communicates to them, that it is not only their privilege, but their duty, to seek to know the mind of the Spirit in that word ; that the state of the heart is a matter of supreme importance, and that no one can safely rest his opinion or his practice on anything short of the revealed will of God. What hearers will such instructions bring into our congregations ? And what members under the Divine blessing, will thus be added to our churches ? Many of them will occupy high places ; all will be useful in the station which God may assign them. Such considerations invest the teacher's office with high responsibilities. Sunday school teachers should not fail to look steadily at their work in all its anticipated results, and to exercise unwavering faith in its adaptation to the spiritual wants of our times. This will render them self-denying, laborious, and successful. It is well observed by a philosophic statesman of a neighbouring country, in his sketch of the life of Washington, " Weakness of conduct is but the consequence of weakness of conviction, for the

strongest of all the springs of human action, is human belief." With such a spirit of faith and holy determination should Sunday school teachers go forth to their work, feeling their own insufficiency and imperfection, yet relying on the influence of the Divine Spirit; thus will they overcome every obstacle to their efforts, and realize the anticipation of the psalmist, when he breathed his devout aspirations, "That our sons may be as plants grown up in their youth; that our daughters may be as corner stones polished after the similitude of a palace." Then will the church join with teachers in exclaiming, with the same inspired writer, "Happy is that people that is in such a case; yea, happy is that people whose God is the Lord."

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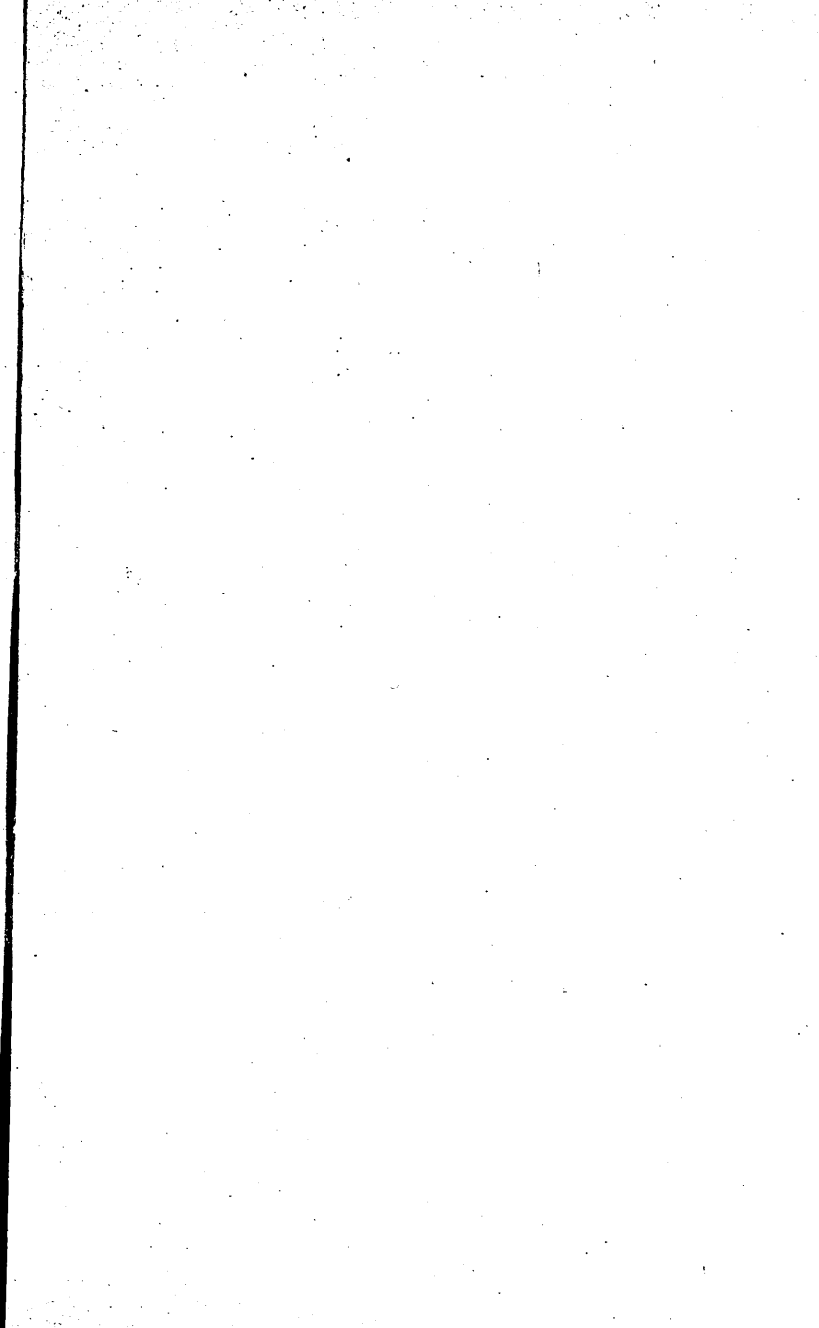
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